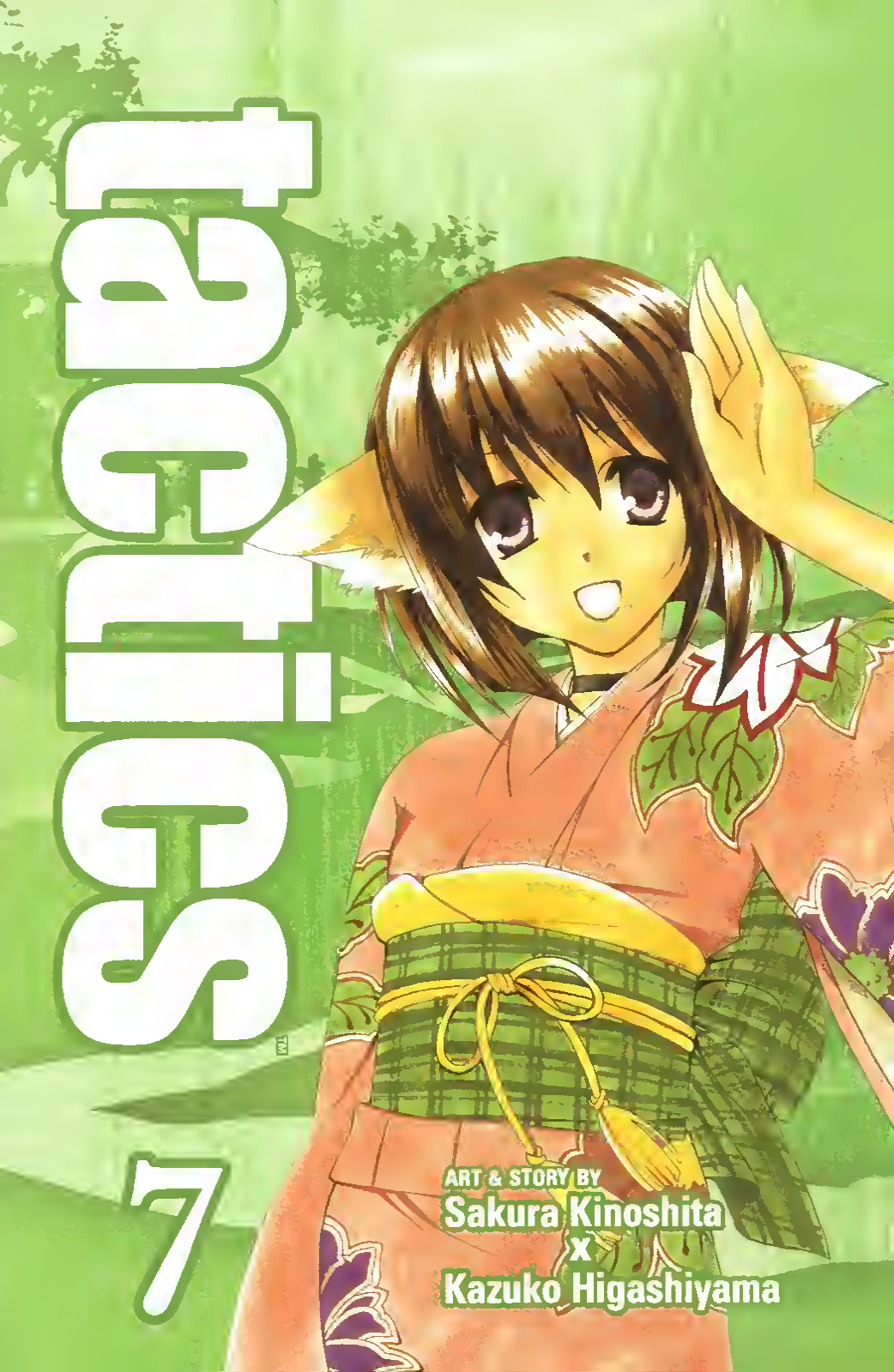
Tactics



7

ART & STORY BY
Sakura Kinoshita
x
Kazuko Higashiyama

tactics
木下さくら×東山和子
Sakura Kinoshita
Kazuko Higashiyama

tactics

Sakura Kinoshita & Kazuko Higashiyama

7

MEMOIRS OF A BEAUTIFUL-FACED THIEF: THE FULL TALES

CHIMERA STAGE

PART I 5

PART II 69

PART III 119

tactics

Volume 7
by Sakura Kinoshita and
Kazuko Higashiyama

tactics Volume 7

Art & Story by Sakura Kinoshita x Kazuko Higashiyama

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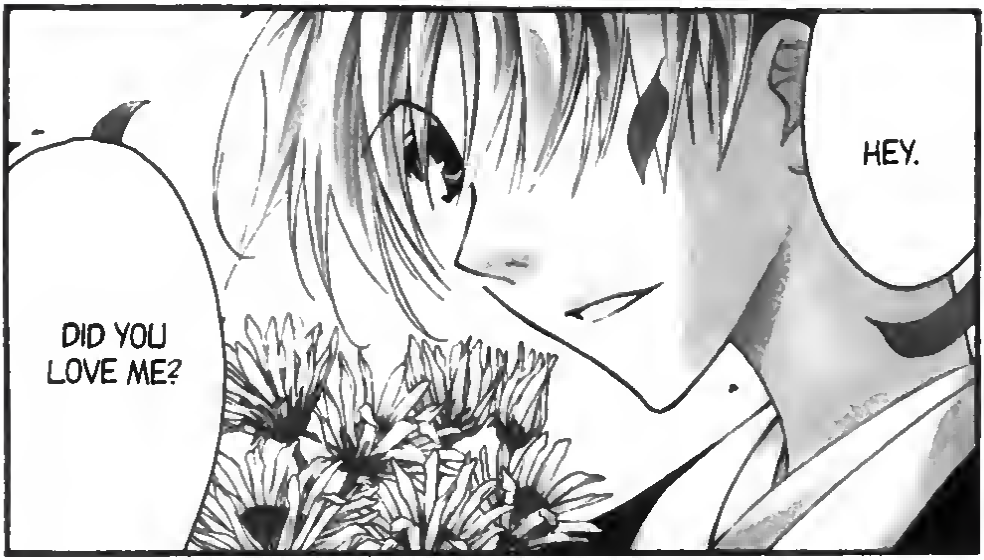
...EVEN THOUGH I KNOW I WON'T GET AN ANSWER I CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER EVERY TIME I COME HERE
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING WAY BACK WHEN?


HEY.
DID YOU LOVE ME?

DEMON-
EATING
TENGU
SHINOBUYO
FUJI SOUSHI
CHIMERA
STAGE
PART I

tactics

...DO YOU HATE ME?
OR...
YO, DEMON EATER!

AND SINCE YOU'RE ACTUALLY OUTSIDE FOR ONCE, I DIDN'T HAVE TO BREAK A WINDOW!
LESS FUN, APPARENTLY
WHERE ARE KANTAROU AND YOUKO?
YOUKO'S AT HER JOB. KANTAROU'S AT A MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR SOME RELATIVE.
I CAME TO HANG.
MUU!
HUNH.
!
WAIT A MINUTE.
SOMETHING HAPPENED, DIDN'T IT?

DO YOU REMEMBER FUJI?
HEY, SUGINO.
.....
DEAD...
LISTEN I WAS SO BUSY LOOKING FOR YOU I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO THINK ABOUT HER. OKAY?
BESIDES, SHE WAS HUMAN--SHE'S SURE TO BE DEAD BY NOW. JUST LET THE DAMN THING GO.
WHAT HAPPENED TO FUJI AFTER I WAS SEALED?
SAY, I'M STARVED. FOOD TIME!
DID YOU NOT JUST HEAR THE WORDS "FOOD" AND "TIME"?!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MANY YEARS IT'S BEEN? HUMANS ONLY LIVE INTO THEIR EIGHTIES, TOPS.
RIGHT! DEAD, GONE, BURIED!

SKRITCH
IT'S A PRETTY RARE PHENOMENON; IF SHE HAD, WE WOULD'VE HEARD ABOUT IT.
WHAT? I DOUBT THAT.
SKRITCH
MAYBE SHE BECAME A TENGU LIKE YOU.
SHE DOESN'T EXACTLY FIT THAT PROFILE.
FALLING DOWN THE PATH OF THE TENGU IS ONLY FOR THE PRIESTS AND AUTHORITIES OF THE WORLD.
THEN

tactics 7

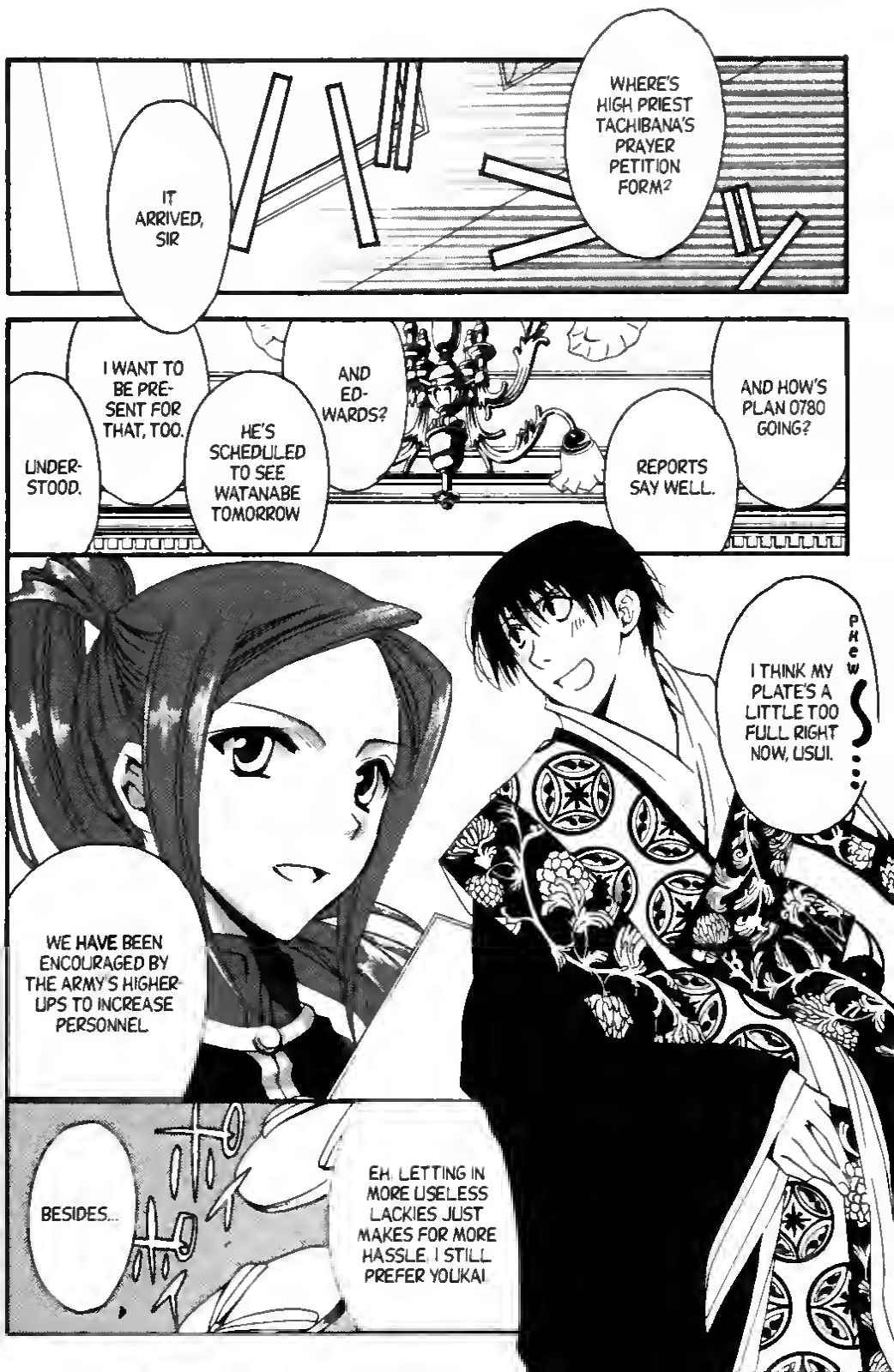
YOU JUST SAID I SHOULD LEAVE THE ISSUE BEHIND ME.
HEY.
HAVE YOU TOLD KANTAROU ABOUT HER?
.....
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'VE GOT AN OBLIGATION TO TELL A HUMAN WHAT YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH, ANYWAY.
AND I WAS RIGHT!
SUGINO...
SO I GUESS YOU DO REMEMBER SOME OF YOUR PAST, DEMON EATER
MAN, I HATED THAT WOMAN.
AS MUCH AS I'M LOATHE TO ADMIT THIS, I PREFER KANTAROU TO THAT WITCH.
ERP!

I SAID I PREFER HIM! LIKE A FACE WOUND TO A CROTCH WOUND!
I WON-OER
MAYBE KANTAROU'S JUST SPECIAL.
YOU KNOW... DIFFERENT FROM OTHER HUMANS.
WE'VE TALKED ABOUT THIS, OEMON EATER. HUMANS AND YOUKAI DON'T MIX.
PUT YOUR FEELINGS OUT THERE AND THEY'RE BOUND TO GET HURT
I...I KNOW
!
ドッ!!

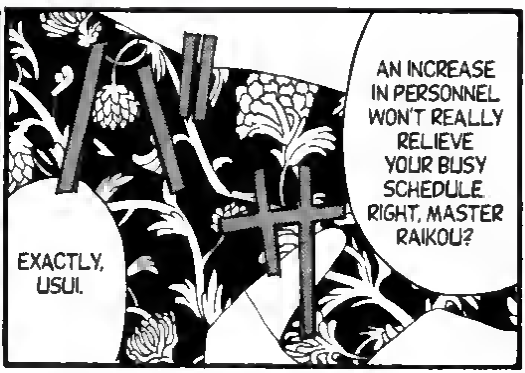
NO, YOU DON'T! YOU DON'T GET IT AT ALL!
I CAN JUST TELL BY YOUR FACE THAT YOU'RE STARTING TO CARE FOR KANTAROU!
WHAT?! DON'T BE A--
DON'T BE A WHAT?! I DON'T TRUST HUMANS, DEMON EATER, AND NEITHER SHOULD YOU!
I USED TO BE HUMAN. I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.
DAMMIT.... YOU YOUKAI-BORN YOUKAI ARE TOO TRUSTING FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.
WHAT AM I GONNA DO WITH YOU?
M-MUU-CHAN?
MUU! MUU! MUU!
FINE. I'M SORRY FOR RAISING MY VOICE, DEAREST.
MOOF!

YOU STILL DON'T HAVE YOUR FULL MEMORIES FROM WHEN YOU WERE SEALED?
WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THE ONE WHO SEALED YOU?
.....
DEMON EATER.
I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING FROM WHEN I WAS SEALED. BUT THE ONE MEMORY I DO HAVE...
...IS OF THAT WOMAN BETRAYING ME.
BETRAYING YOU?
WAIT A MINUTE!

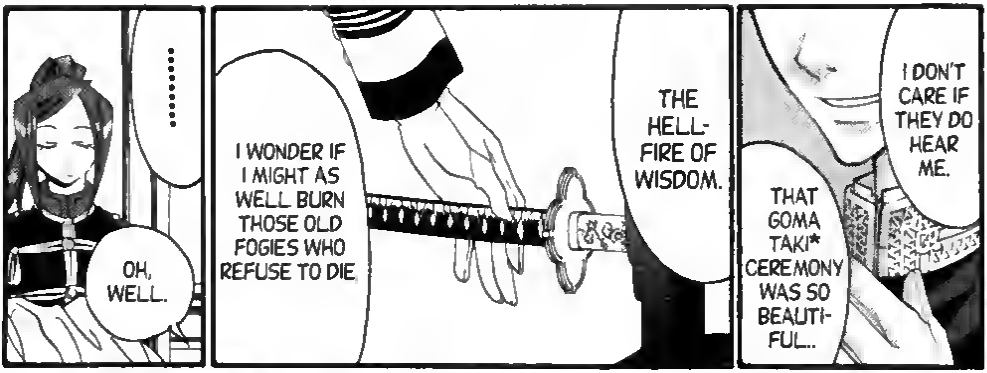
THAT REMINDS ME! WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE GUYS?!
WHAT GUYS?
YOU KNOW·· THOSE GUYS! THE ONES WHO HUNG OUT WITH YOU!
YOUR GRAY AND BROWN ESCORT GUYS!
I...I FORGOT ABOUT THEM.
WOW. SOME FRIEND YOU ARE


WHERE'S HIGH PRIEST TACHIBANA'S PRAYER PETITION FORM?
IT ARRIVED, SIR
AND HOW'S PLAN 0780 GOING?
REPORTS SAY WELL.
AND EDWARDS?
HE'S SCHEDULED TO SEE WATANABE TOMORROW
I WANT TO BE PRESENT FOR THAT, TOO.
UNDERSTOOD.
PHEW S...
I THINK MY PLATE'S A LITTLE TOO FULL RIGHT NOW, USUI.
WE HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY THE ARMY'S HIGHER-UPS TO INCREASE PERSONNEL
EH. LETTING IN MORE USELESS LACKIES JUST MAKES FOR MORE HASSLE. I STILL PREFER YOUKAI
BESIDES...

AND AFTER ALL THE ILLNESS-RECOVERY PRAYERS THE OTHER PRIESTS PERFORMED FOR YOU...
NOTHING BUT FLUFF. I WAS JUST HUMORING THEM.
AND YOU KNOW WHAT?


AN INCREASE IN PERSONNEL WON'T REALLY RELIEVE YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE. RIGHT, MASTER RAIKOU?
EXACTLY, USUI.

I SAY WE LET MEN LIKE THAT HEAL THEIR OWN "IMPURE" ILLNESSES. THE ENTIRE THING IS SUCH A JOKE.
THOSE WHO PRAY ARE THE FIRST TO TRY AND BAN PRAYING TO THE TABOO.
EVEN THOUGH THEIR JOB ACTUALLY RELIES ON "IMPURITIES."
MASTER RAIKOU.
WE SHOULD BE QUIET WHEN OTHERS COULD BE LISTENING

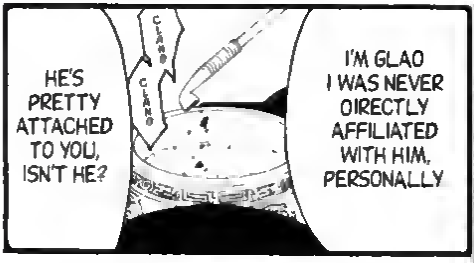

.....
OH, WELL.
I WONDER IF I MIGHT AS WELL BURN THOSE OLD FOGIES WHO REFUSE TO DIE.
THE HELL-FIRE OF WISDOM.
I DON'T CARE IF THEY DO HEAR ME.
THAT GOMA TAKI* CEREMONY WAS SO BEAUTI-FUL...

*A tantric fire ritual that takes place on New Year's Eve in Japan.

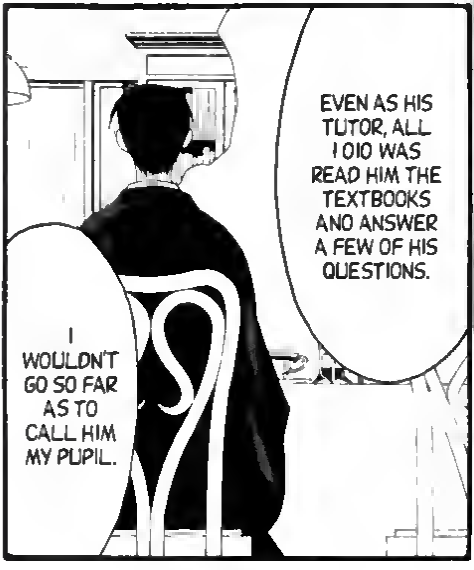
WHEN I TOLD THEM HOW YOU HAVE MORE EXPERIENCE WITH THIS SORT OF THING, THEY ASKED ME TO INTRODUCE YOU.
THIS IS OUT OF MY JURISDICTION. I WOULDN'T BE HERE IF THEY HADN'T INSISTED.
I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D TAKE A COMMISSION FOR A SIDE JOB LIKE THIS, HASUMI.
IT'S NOT LIKE YOUR TIGHT-ASS WAYS.
IT LOOKS LIKE OUR GUEST IS RUNNING LATE.
YEAH?
I GUESS YOU COULD SAY THAT.
HM? ICHINOMIYA, DID YOU JUST COME BACK FROM VISITING A GRAVE?
I SMELL INCENSE ON YOU.
THE ONE-EYED GOBLIN, HUH?
DON'T READ OVER MY SHOULDER!
I SWEAR, YOU'RE JUST AS JUVENILE AS YOU WERE IN SCHOOL!
BWAH!

AND YOU STILL ENJOY AVOIDING QUESTIONS, I SEE.
ANYWAY! DO YOU THINK THE ONE-EYED GOBLIN'S AN EMBODIMENT OF A GOD, TOO?
"IMPURE" LIKE THE TABOO OF THE DECEASED?
"DEATH," IN OTHER WORDS?
I CAN'T SAY I DO
THEN THAT MEANS YOU ALSO THINK OF YOUKAI AS "IMPURE."
YOU ALSO FOLLOW THE SCHOOL OF THOUGHT THAT CONSIDERS YOUKAI AS FALLEN GODS?
I DON'T LIKE THE TERM "FALLEN GOD," HASUMI, BUT YES--I'D SAY IT'S A CONVINCING ARGUMENT.
HASUMI..
WHAT?
YOU SEEM SUBDUED TODAY.
HOW MATURE OF YOU. I WAS EXPECTING YOUR RESPONSE TO BE A SCREAMED NEGATIVE, POSSIBLY FOLLOWED BY ASH IN MY EYES.

WELL... MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT.
WHEN IT COMES TO YOUKAI, YOU ALWAYS LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO HASN'T CHANGED SINCE SCHOOL.


HE'S PRETTY ATTACHED TO YOU, ISN'T HE?
I'M GLAD I WAS NEVER DIRECTLY AFFILIATED WITH HIM, PERSONALLY

I HEARD YOU MET WITH THAT ROYAL PAIN-IN-THE-ASS RAIKOU MINAMOTO EARLIER.
I GUESS YOU HAVE TO MEET UP EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, SINCE HE WAS YOUR PUPIL.


EVEN AS HIS TUTOR, ALL I DID WAS READ HIM THE TEXTBOOKS AND ANSWER A FEW OF HIS QUESTIONS.
I WOULDN'T GO SO FAR AS TO CALL HIM MY PUPIL.

10日ン
I STILL HAVEN'T PAID BACK THAT DEBT I OWE YOU, ICHINOMIYA.
HAVE I?
DON'T TRY TO PAY IT BACK SO EASILY, HASUMI.
IT'S WORTH MORE THAN THAT.
...HMPH.
EXCUSE ME, MAY I COME IN?

YOU'RE A THOROUGHLY UNPLEASANT MAN, ICHINOMIYA.
NOT LONG AGO, MY SON LOST HIS NEW WIFE TO AN ILLNESS.
HIS NAME IS KENSAKU.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE HEARD THIS FROM, BUT HE SAID THERE'S AN ORGANIZATION CALLED THE TORATSUGUMI SOCIETY THAT BRINGS BACK THE DEAD. I WARNED HIM AGAINST IT, BUT HE STILL BROUGHT THEM HIS WIFE'S CORPSE.
NOW HE'S GONE MISSING.
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF SUCH AN ORGANIZATION. WHAT ABOUT YOU, ICHINOMIYA?
TORA-TSUGUMI..

A DOLL?
DID IT SEEM LIKE THE DOLL HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH HIS DEAD WIFE?
YES.
NO--HE CAME BACK HOME AT ONE POINT.
HE WAS CARRYING A DOLL.
THEN THE LAST TIME YOU SAW KENSAKU, HE WAS CARRYING THE CORPSE?
THE CHIMERA, EH?
A FITTING NAME FOR A BIZARRE SOCIETY...
.....
AND HE GAVE THE DOLL THE SAME NAME AS HIS WIFE-- HE EVEN SPENT THE WHOLE DAY TALKING TO IT.
IT WAS SO STRANGE, SIR. A GROWN MAN PLAYING WITH A DOLL.
WELL, HE ND LONGER HAD HIS WIFE'S BODY WITH HIM.
BOTH HE AND THE DOLL WERE GONE.
I FINALLY DECIDED TO BRING KENSAKU TO A DOCTOR, BUT WHEN I WENT TO HIS ROOM...
DID YOU HEAR A VOICE?
OF COURSE NOT. NOT A WORD.
HE EVEN SAID.. THE DOLL SPOKE TO HIM.

I DON'T ACTUALLY SPECIALIZE IN MISSING PEOPLE--
I DON'T CARE!
AND SINCE YOUR SON DISAPPEARED A MONTH AGO, AND THE POLICE ARE CONSIDERING HIM A RUNAWAY, YOU HAD TO HIRE AN INVESTIGATOR.
THIS DOESN'T SOUND GOOD, ICHINOMIYA. I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE WE CAN DO.
CLICK
YOU CAN TURN THE CASE DOWN IF YOU WANT.
MA'AM...
.....
I'M BEGGING YOU, PLEASE! I WANT MY SON BACK!
I KNOW THAT THAT'S YOUR SPECIALTY, ICHINOMIYA-SENSEI!
I WON'T BELIEVE HE JUST RAN AWAY FROM ME! SOMETHING POSSESSED HIM-- SOMETHING POSSESSED MY KENSAKU!

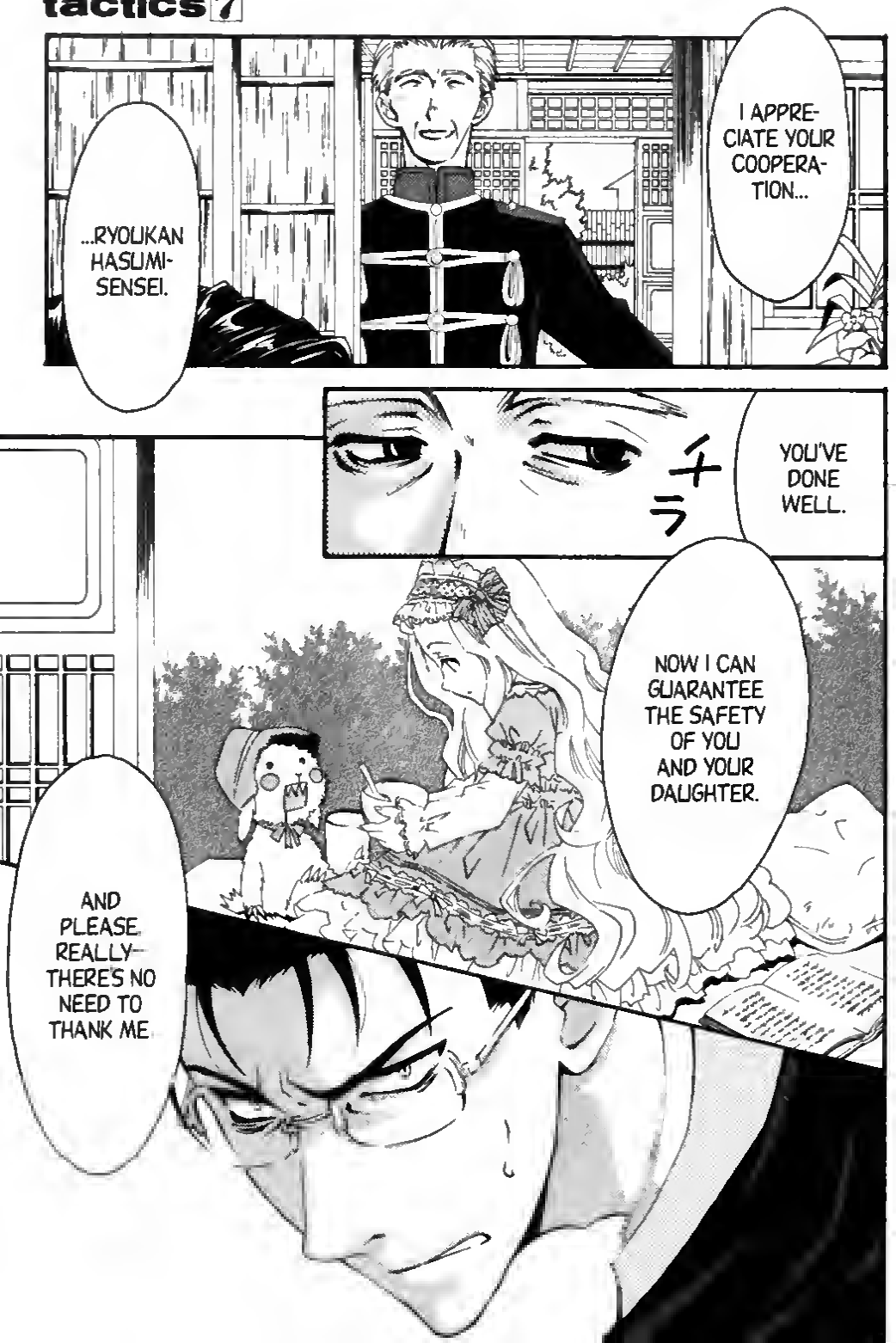
...I DON'T CARE WHAT FORM HE COMES IN...!
IF I CAN JUST HAVE HIM IN MY ARMS AGAIN...
THAT POOR WOMAN.
YOU HAD SOME NERVE DISCUSSING THE FEE WITH HER WHILE SHE WAS IN THAT STATE!
Let's start with this much, shall we?
Hee Hee!
WHAT CAN I SAY? I'M A BRAVE MAN.
I DIDN'T MEAN IT AS A COMPLIMENT!
What's wrong with you?!
I'D BETTER GO.
BY THE WAY, HASUMI..

WATCH YOUR BACK AROUND RAIKOU MINAMOTO.
YOU DON'T WANT TO SCREW UP A SECOND TIME, DO YOU?
IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, LET ME KNOW, ALL RIGHT?

ER...
WHAT? DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE CHARGING A FINDER'S FEE.
ひょこ
SORRY FOR THE INTRUSION!
ヒョイ!
AND THANKS FOR THE NEW JOB.
ICHINOMIYA!

...DON'T LET THE TORA-TSUGUMI BEWITCH YOU.
I'LL BE CAREFUL, PUMPKIN.
WELL. AREN'T YOU A SWEET-HEART?
...WAS THE ONE THING I NEVER WANTED YOU TO GET MIXED UP IN.
ICHINO-MIYA...
THE COMMISSION ONLY MADE HIM GO WHERE HE MUST
IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN A SELF-EVIDENT TRUTH
THIS COMMIS-SION...
ドッ……

tactics 7


I APPRE-
CIATE YOUR
COOPERA-
TION...
...RYOUKAN
HASUMI-
SENSEI.
チラ
YOU'VE
DONE
WELL.
NOW I CAN
GUARANTEE
THE SAFETY
OF YOU
AND YOUR
DAUGHTER.
AND
PLEASE,
REALLY—
THERE'S NO
NEED TO
THANK ME.

M-MY BELOVED LITTLE SISTER DIED RECENTLY, YOU SEE.
WHEN I HEARD THE RUMORS ABOUT THE TORATSUGUMI SOCIETY, I WAS... DESPERATE ENOUGH TO RUN FROM THE CITY.
I JUST NEVER REALIZED THEIR HEAD-QUARTERS WAS THIS DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS.
HUFF HUFF
I THINK I MAY JOIN HER SOON
JUST A BIT FURTHER, SIR. AND YOU'RE GOING TO BE FINE
OUR PRACTICES ARE CONSIDERED SOMEWHAT TABOO IN THE EYES OF SOCIETY, SO WE CAN'T CARRY THEM OUT IN PUBLIC. OUR ONLY CHOICE IS TO HOLD OUR BASE AWAY FROM PRYING EYES
THAT MAKES.. SENSE
HUFF HUFF
ガラ
ガラ
DAMMIT.

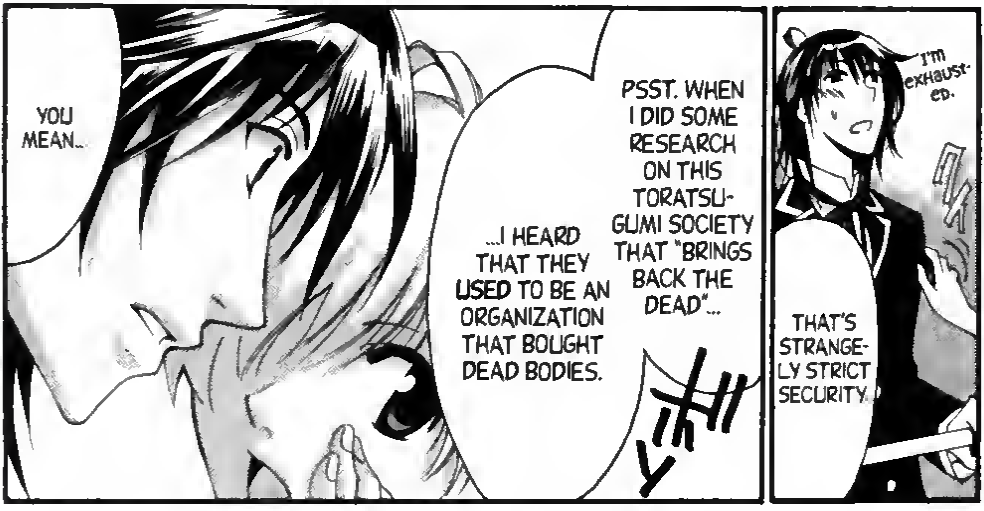
!!
WE SHOULD MAKE THAT GOON PULL IT FOR US
WHY AM I THE CORPSE LACKEY?
OR YOU COULD HELP, KANTAROU JERK
YOU SAID YOU'D DO THIS!
HURRY UP WITH THE COFFIN PULLING!
HARUKA!
I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS!
HE'S A DEAR LIKE THAT.
HE MUST BE REALLY ANXIOUS FOR YOUR SISTER'S RETURN.
STOP USING MY NAME FOR THINGS THAT HURT ME!
DAMN YOU, KAN-TAROU!

within the

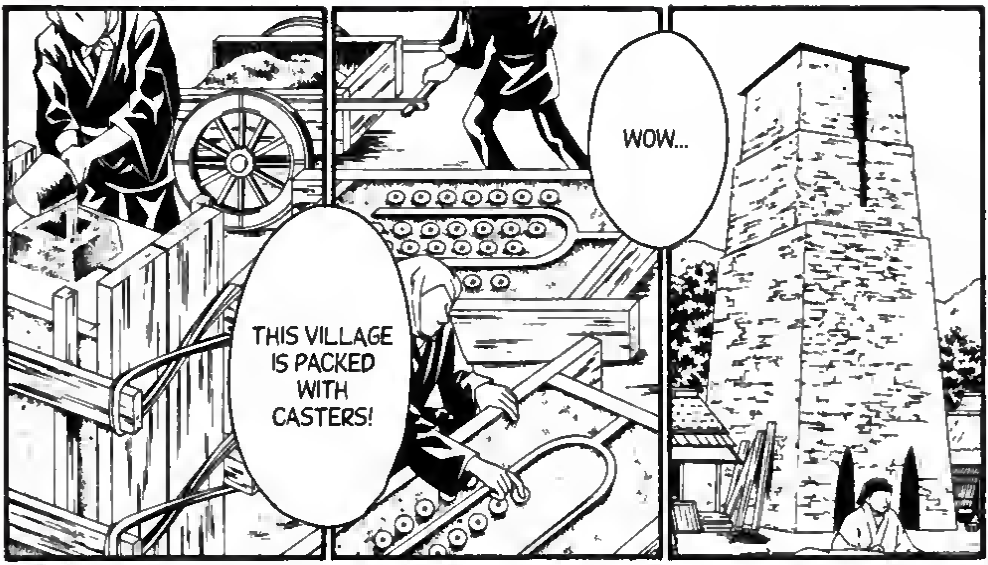
coffin.

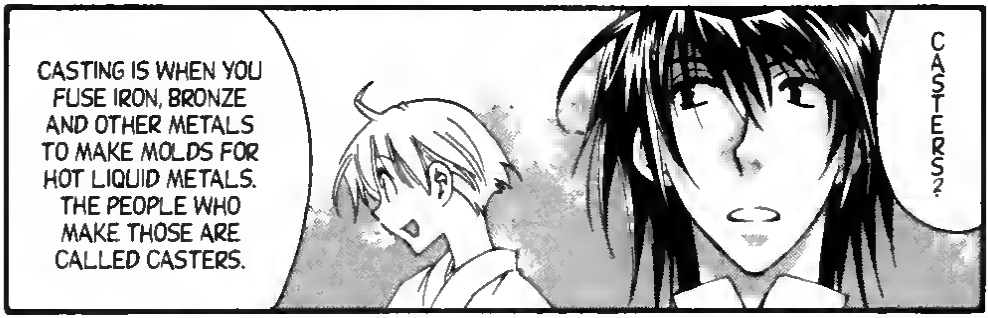
THIS IS THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE TORATSUGUMI SOCIETY, HM?

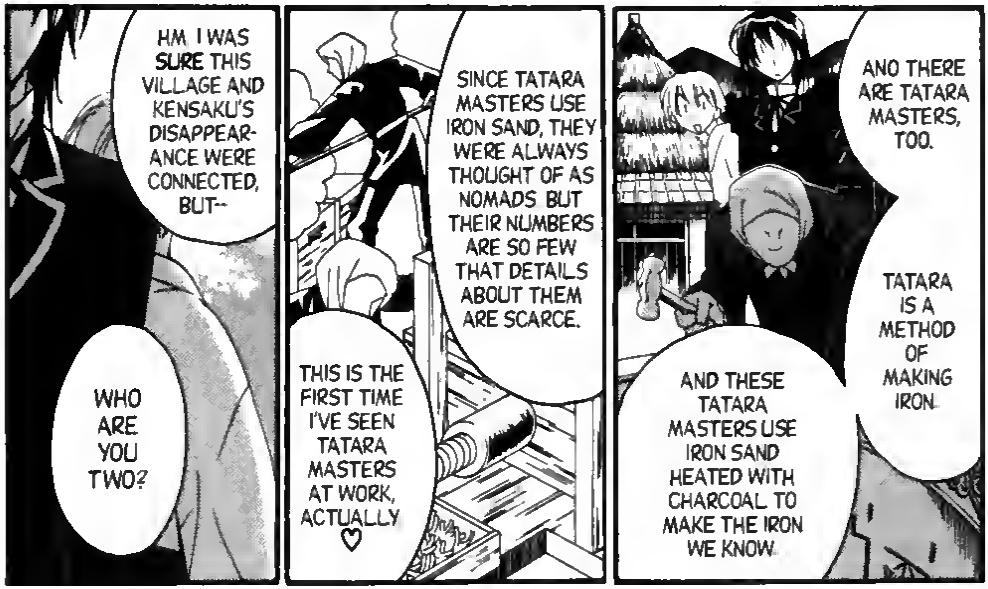
A VILLAGE SEPARATED FROM CIVILIZATION LIKE THIS WOULDN'T USUALLY HAVE A FENCE.
MAYBE IT'S THE ONLY WAY INTO THE VILLAGE... IT WOULD CERTAINLY KEEP THINGS TIGHT.


I'm exhausted.
THAT'S STRANGELY STRICT SECURITY.
PSST. WHEN I DID SOME RESEARCH ON THIS TORATSUGUMI SOCIETY THAT "BRINGS BACK THE DEAD"...
...I HEARD THAT THEY USED TO BE AN ORGANIZATION THAT BOUGHT DEAD BODIES.
YOU MEAN...

THIS WAY, MISTER ICHINOMIYA.
I THINK THEIR REAL GOAL IS TO ACCUMULATE DEAD BODIES, FOR SOME REASON.
RIGHT.


WOW...
THIS VILLAGE IS PACKED WITH CASTERS!

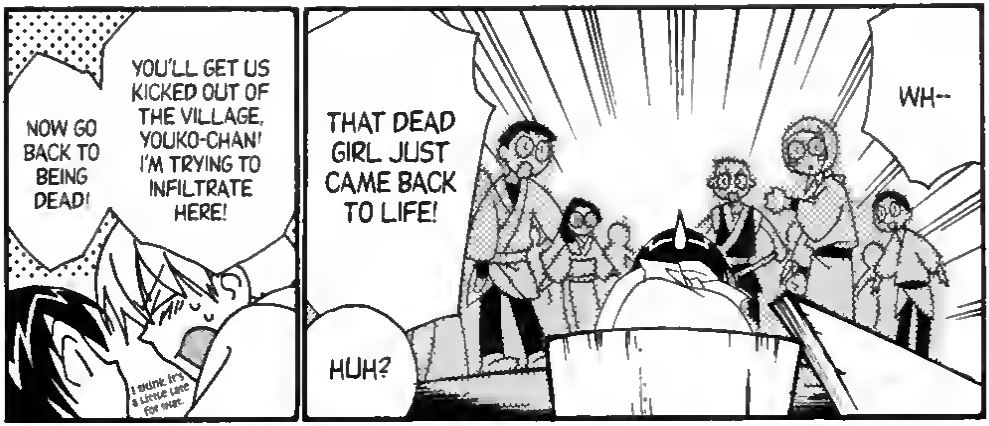

CASTERS?
CASTING IS WHEN YOU FUSE IRON, BRONZE AND OTHER METALS TO MAKE MOLDS FOR HOT LIQUID METALS. THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE THOSE ARE CALLED CASTERS.

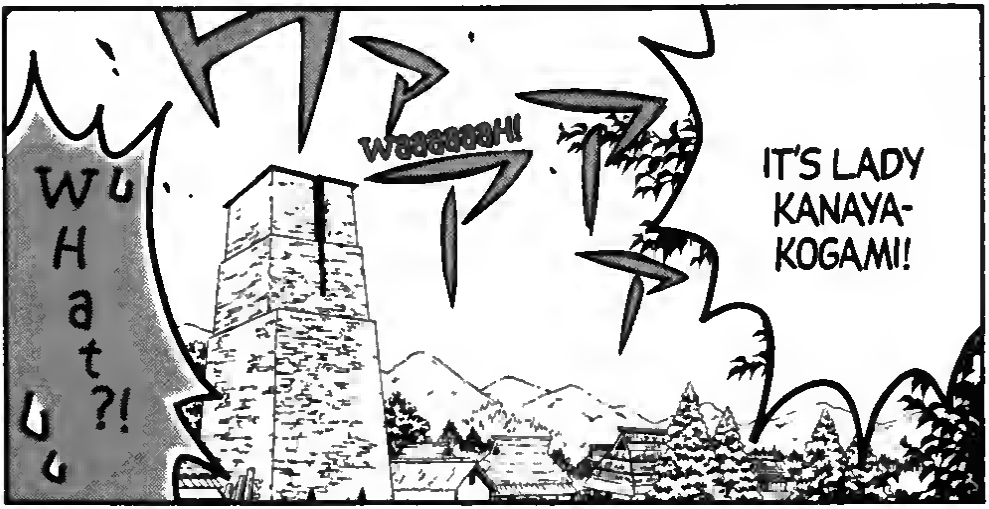

AND THERE ARE TATARA MASTERS, TOO.
TATARA IS A METHOD OF MAKING IRON.
AND THESE TATARA MASTERS USE IRON SAND HEATED WITH CHARCOAL TO MAKE THE IRON WE KNOW.
SINCE TATARA MASTERS USE IRON SAND, THEY WERE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF AS NOMADS BUT THEIR NUMBERS ARE SO FEW THAT DETAILS ABOUT THEM ARE SCARCE.
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN TATARA MASTERS AT WORK, ACTUALLY ♡
HM. I WAS SURE THIS VILLAGE AND KENSAKU'S DISAPPEARANCE WERE CONNECTED, BUT--
WHO ARE YOU TWO?

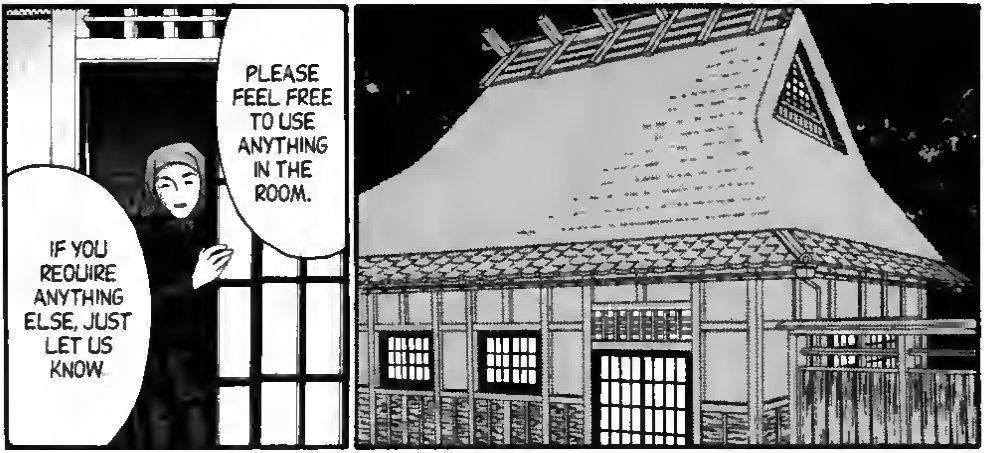
HUH?
ER NO ONE SUSPI-CIOUS HONEST.
わらわらわら
SHOULD I BEAT THEM UP, KANTAROU?
PLEASE DON'T.
YIPE!
YOU'RE SO WHITE!
HOLD on a--
UH...
AND THIS ONE'S SO TALL AND HANDSOME!
FORGET HIM THIS ONE IS SO PRETTY AND PALE!
PLENTY OF PEOPLE FROM THE CITY COME TO OUR VILLAGE, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE'VE SEEN SOMEONE LIKE THIS!
WHOA. LOOK CLOSER!

OOH!
AAH!
HIS EYES ARE RED!
HOW CREEPY! HA HA HA!
...KAN-TAROU?
I... UH...
I WAS BORN THIS PALE I CAN'T EXACTLY.. HELP IT.
NO ONE IN THE CITY SEEMS TO CARE THAT I'M ABNORMAL.
THIS KIND OF REACTION REALLY.. TAKES ME BACK.

OW! WHAT DID I JUST SAY?! OW!
TAKE A GOOD LOOK, ALL OF YOU.
YOWCH! NO PULLING!
LOOK!
TUG
WOOOOW!
THEY ARE REAL!
ARE THESE FEATHERS FOR REAL?!
HARUKA!
ARE WE CLEAR?
THIS IS CREEPY.
SOME OF US ARE TRYING TO SLEEP!
EVERYBODY SHUT UP!


NOW GO BACK TO BEING DEAD!
YOU'LL GET US KICKED OUT OF THE VILLAGE, YOUKO-CHAN! I'M TRYING TO INFILTRATE HERE!
I think it's a little late for that.
THAT DEAD GIRL JUST CAME BACK TO LIFE!
WH--
HUH?


What?!
Waaaaah!
IT'S LADY KANAYA-KOGAMI!


PLEASE FEEL FREE TO USE ANYTHING IN THE ROOM.
IF YOU REQUIRE ANYTHING ELSE, JUST LET US KNOW.

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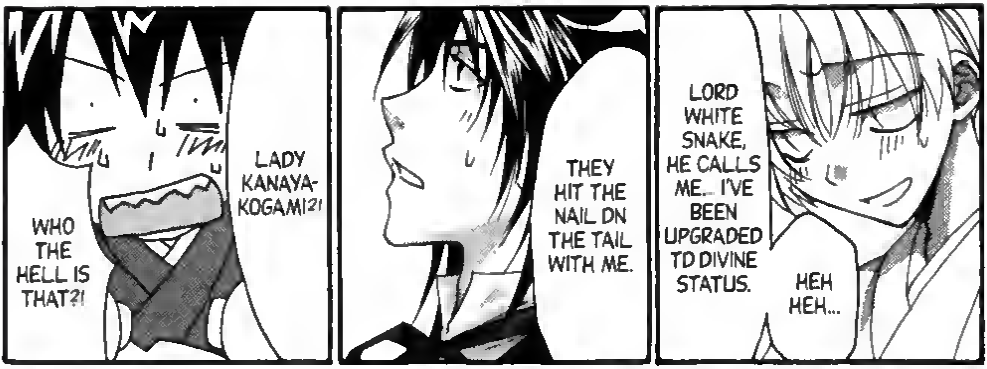
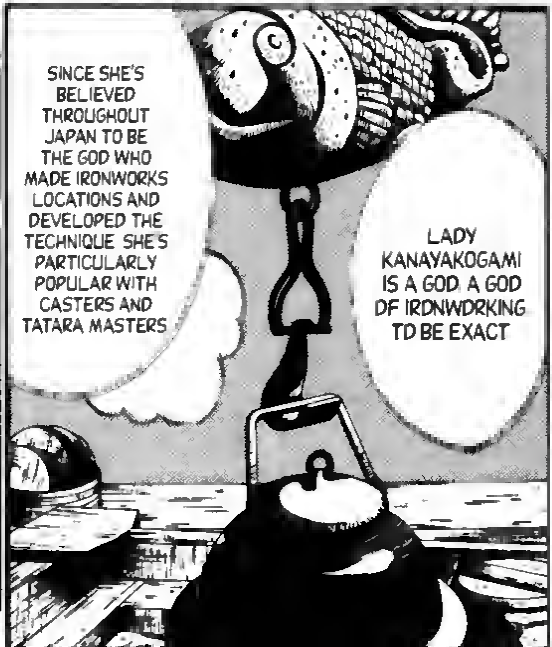
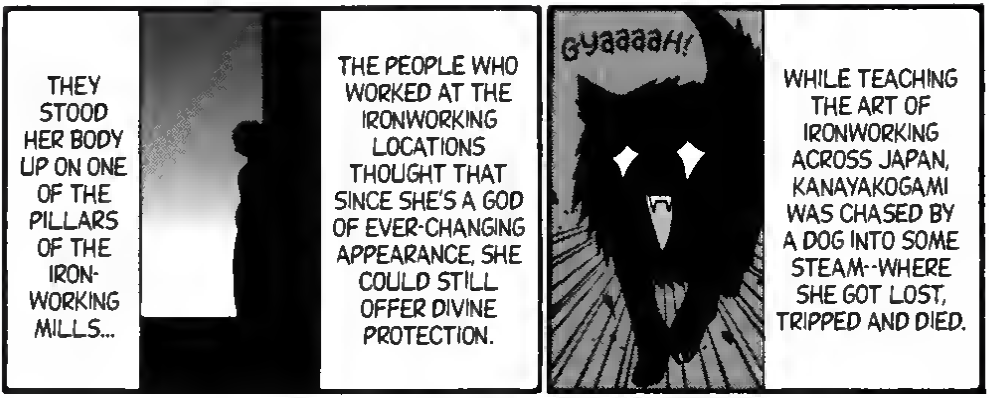
NOW I TAKE MY LEAVE, LORD WHITE SNAKE, LORD TENGU...
ぽかーん。。。
...AND LADY KANAYA-KOGAMI.


LORD WHITE SNAKE, HE CALLS ME... I'VE BEEN UPGRADED TO DIVINE STATUS.
HEH HEH...
THEY HIT THE NAIL ON THE TAIL WITH ME.
LADY KANAYA-KOGAMI?!
WHO THE HELL IS THAT?!

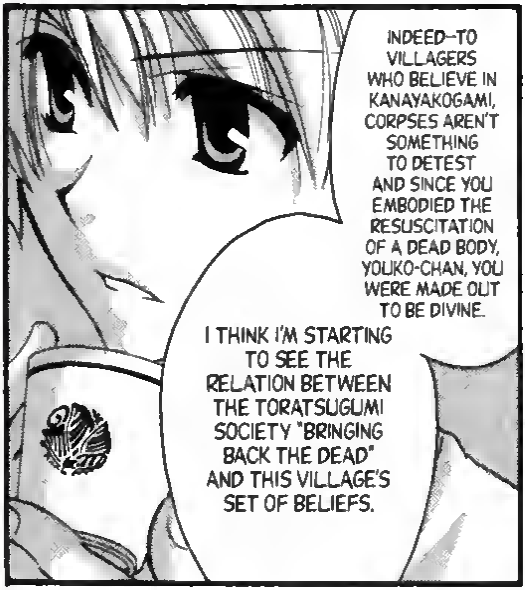
OKAY, FINE. BUT DOES SHE HAPPEN TO LOOK JUST LIKE ME?

HM? OH, YEAH.
THAT BIT COMES FROM THE LEGEND.

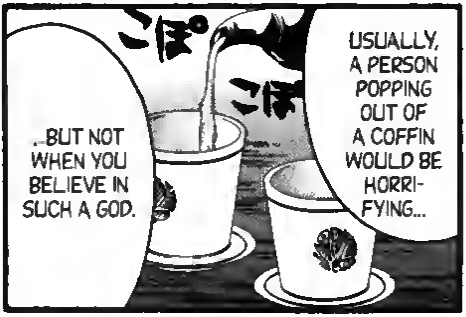

SINCE SHE'S BELIEVED THROUGHOUT JAPAN TO BE THE GOD WHO MADE IRONWORKS LOCATIONS AND DEVELOPED THE TECHNIQUE. SHE'S PARTICULARLY POPULAR WITH CASTERS AND TATARA MASTERS
LADY KANAYAKOGAMI IS A GOD. A GOD OF IRONWORKING TO BE EXACT


THEY STOOD HER BODY UP ON ONE OF THE PILLARS OF THE IRON-WORKING MILLS...
THE PEOPLE WHO WORKED AT THE IRONWORKING LOCATIONS THOUGHT THAT SINCE SHE'S A GOD OF EVER-CHANGING APPEARANCE, SHE COULD STILL OFFER DIVINE PROTECTION.
GYAAAAH!
WHILE TEACHING THE ART OF IRONWORKING ACROSS JAPAN, KANAYAKOGAMI WAS CHASED BY A DOG INTO SOME STEAM--WHERE SHE GOT LOST, TRIPPED AND DIED.

THIS LEGEND CAN BE INTERPRETED AS PROMOTING THE IDEA OF GOOD FORTUNE STEMMING FROM SOMETHING IMPURE (A CORPSE). IT'S THE PHENOMENON OF REVERSAL.
...AND THEY SAY THAT JUST LIKE WHEN SHE WAS ALIVE, THE MILLS WERE BLESSED WITH PLENTIFUL IRON.
Long Live Baby Kanayakogami!


INDEED--TO VILLAGERS WHO BELIEVE IN KANAYAKOGAMI, CORPSES AREN'T SOMETHING TO DETEST AND SINCE YOU EMBODIED THE RESUSCITATION OF A DEAD BODY, YOUKO-CHAN, YOU WERE MADE OUT TO BE DIVINE.
I THINK I'M STARTING TO SEE THE RELATION BETWEEN THE TORATSUGUMI SOCIETY "BRINGING BACK THE DEAD" AND THIS VILLAGE'S SET OF BELIEFS.

Aroo
Oooo!
THAT'S RIGHT, KAN-CHAN--YOU'RE A DOG-HATING BASTARD!
AND I CAN PERSONALLY RELATE TO HER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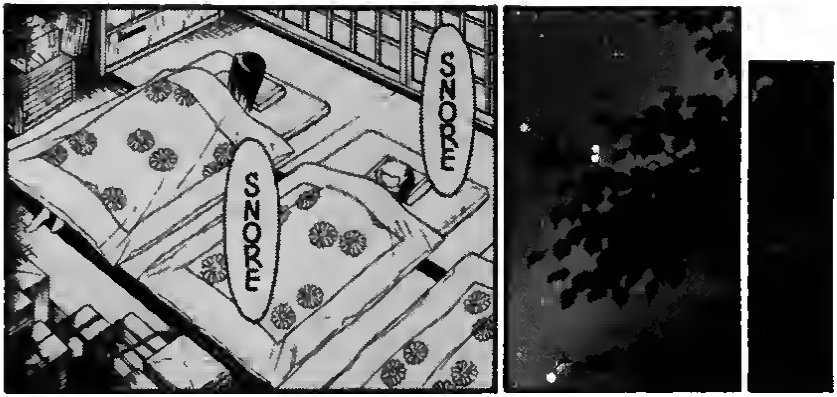
...BUT NOT WHEN YOU BELIEVE IN SUCH A GOD.
USUALLY, A PERSON POPPING OUT OF A COFFIN WOULD BE HORRI-FYING...

HM.
THAT WOULD EXPLAIN THEM CALLING ME HOLY, TOO.

ALSO, IT SEEMS THAT THE LOCALS ARE PRETTY QUICK TO SEE STRANGERS AS HOLY.
POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF BLIND PEOPLE IN THE RELIGIONS OF JAPAN, THERE ARE CASES OF CALLING SUCH PEOPLE THE INCARNATION OF GODS. IT'S LIKE THE ORIGIN STORY OF THE ONE-EYED GOBLIN BEING A SHINTO PRIEST WHO LOST ONE EYE AND ASCENDED INTO BEING A SPIRIT.

IN ANY CASE YOUKO-CHAN BLEW THE LID ON OUR CORPSE TACTIC. WE'LL JUST SEARCH FOR KENSAKU MORE DIRECTLY TOMORROW.
IT IS WEIRD.
HEY!
I JUST FORGOT THAT YOU'RE A SCHOLAR AND NOT A USELESS SACK.
KAN-CHAN
...WHY ARE YOU STARING?


SNORE
SNORE

KANTARO...
SNORE
SNORE
HARUKA.
WANT TO WALK AND TALK?
IT'S TOO EARLY TO GO TO BED YET.
ER...
...ABOUT EARLIER.
HEY, HARUKA.
WHAT?

HUH?
YOU'RE EXAGGERATING.
THANKS FOR COMING TO MY RESCUE.
ANY SURPRISED LOOKS ARE LIMITED TO FIRST GLANCES--THAT SORT OF THING
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE MORE FOREIGNERS HAVE BEEN COMING TO JAPAN, BUT THE CITY PEOPLE AND OTHER ACQUAINTANCES DON'T COMMENT ON WHAT THEY SEE.
I DON'T USUALLY WORRY ABOUT MY APPEARANCE THESE DAYS.

I NEVER HAD A PROBLEM WITH THE COLOR OF YOUR EYES.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE EXCUSES.
HA HA HA!
SINCE THIS VILLAGE IS SO BACKWATER, EVERYONE MADE AN UNUSUALLY BIG DEAL OUT OF IT.

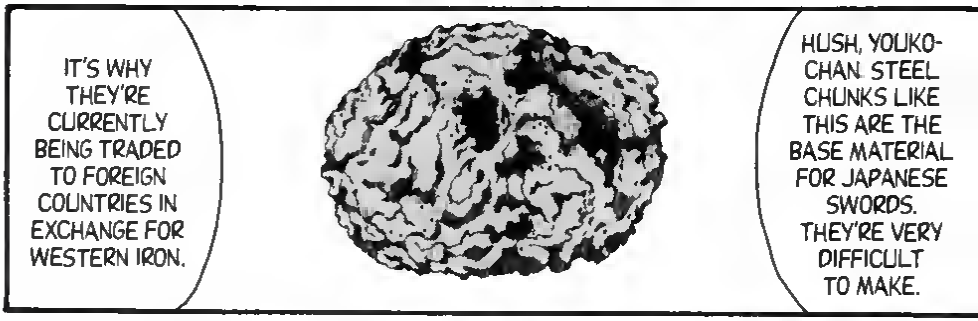
HARUKA, THAT LINE JUST TINGLED UP MY SPINE.
...WHAT'S THE MATTER?
?
THEY REMIND ME OF MARBLES.
I WISH I COULD HAVE THEM.
HM. MAYBE I'VE GROWN TO LIKE IT TOO
THE COLOR OF MY EYES. I MEAN.
.....
WHAT IS IT?
IT WASN'T FAST HARUKA-- I'VE BEEN DWELLING! DWELLING!
YOU JUST CHANGED YOUR OPINION PRETTY FAST
I THOUGHT YOU HATED YOUR EYES

HUNH. BUT THE THING I ACTUALLY WANTED TO ASK HIM ABOUT...
...WAS WHAT HAPPENED THAT DAY WE HAD ALL THAT RAIN

GOOD MORNING!
GODD MORNING LADY KANAYA KOGAMI LORD WHITE SNAKE AND LORD TENGU!
MAN KAN' CHAN... THIS PLACE SEEMS REALLY NORMAL.
IS THIS REALLY WHERE THEY BRING BACK THE DEAD?
MORNING!
I'M NOT SURE. THEY DON'T SEEM TO HAVE ANY SORCERERS OF THAT NATURE-- AND I HAVEN'T NOTICED ANY DOLL-MAKING.
I WAS EXPECTING A MORE FANATIC GROUP, NOT A CALM VILLAGE OF IRONWORKERS.
OH, HOW DARLING!
AT ANY RATE, LET'S FOCUS ON OUR PRIMARY GOAL-- RETRIEVING THE MISSING KENSAKU.
WE'LL START WITH RECONNAIS-SANCE WORK

tactics 7

ARE THOSE CHUNKS OF STEEL? FASCINATING!
YOU THINK EVERYTHING IS FASCINATING
It looks so expensive! ♡
LOOK AT THAT LOVELY LITTLE KATANA! WHO LOVES YOU, KATANA!


IT'S WHY THEY'RE CURRENTLY BEING TRADED TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES IN EXCHANGE FOR WESTERN IRON.
HUSH, YOUKO-CHAN. STEEL CHUNKS LIKE THIS ARE THE BASE MATERIAL FOR JAPANESE SWORDS. THEY'RE VERY DIFFICULT TO MAKE.

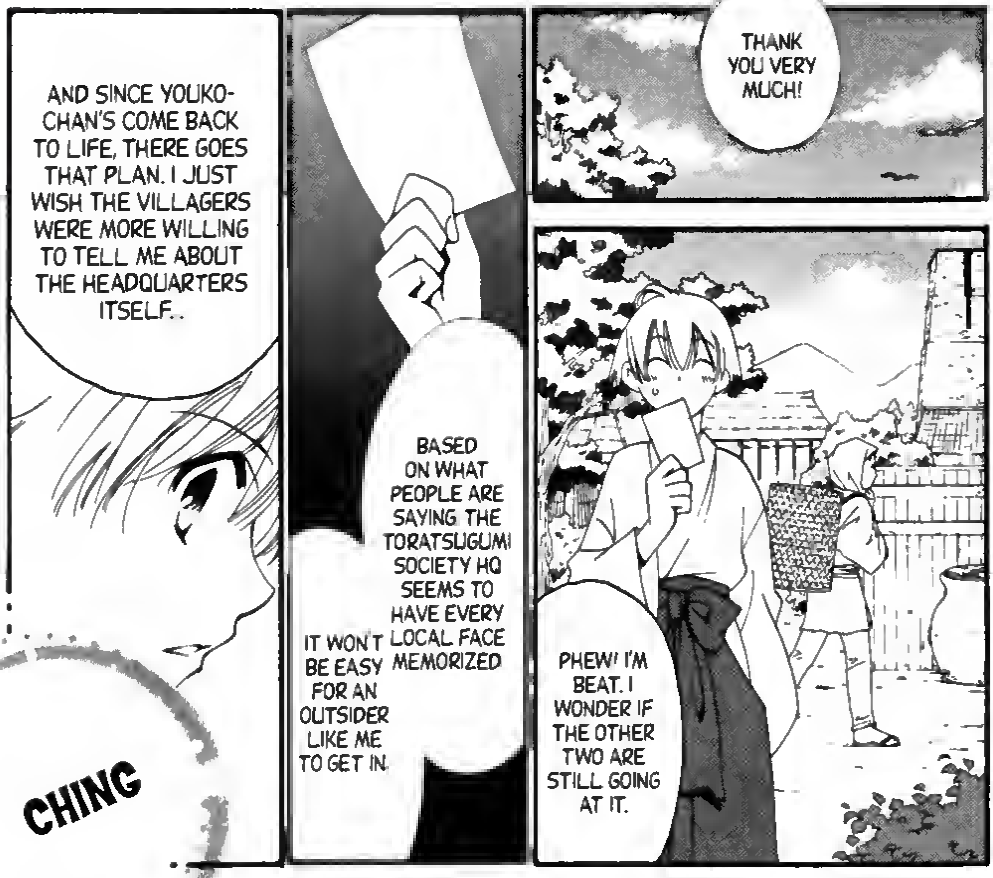
DOES SOMETHING TROUBLE YOU?
WELL, WELL! SO YOU THREE ARE THE LIVING GODS!
.....
HM? WHAT'S WRITTEN ON THESE KATANA?
WELL, I'M NO EXPERT
YOU ARE VERY IN-FORMED, MY LORD.
Tetsugorou Sakarou
Kamematsu Suzuki
Tomonamatsu Ojita
Kino Takeda

.....
I MUST SAY, YOU'RE A SHADY GROUP IF I EVER DID SEE ONE!
IRK
WELCOME! I'M THE VILLAGE HEADMAN, MURATA.
BEHIND ME ARE MY SON SHOUSUKE AND HIS WIFE, UMI.
WHY, THANK YOU! WE'RE WHITE SNAKE, THE TENGU AND KANAYA-KOGAMI!
IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S TRYING TO HIDE HIS IDENTITY.
MAYBE IT'S SELF-LOATHING!
Ha Ha!
Ha Ha
AND OUR SHADINESS PALES IN COMPARISON TO YOURS, GOOD SIR!
AND WHAT DO YOU WORK AS IN THE CITY? ARE THESE GUYS YOUR YOU-KNOW-WHAT?
POINT
WOW, THAT'S THE RUDEST POSSIBLE THING TO COME OUT AND ASK ME THOSE TWO ARE MY FAMILY AND MY DAY JOB IS WAITING TABLES, BIG GUY.
ME? YEAH.
HEY, LITTLE LADY. DID YOU COME FROM THE CITY, TOO?

NOW I WANT YOU EVEN MORE. ☆
A WAITRESS?!
NO, NO... I WANT YOU. ☆
YOUR WIFE IS RIGHT THERE! DO YOU WANT ME TO CALL HER OVER?!
WHOA, BUDDY! YOU DON'T WANT ME-- YOU WANT TO NAIL THE CITY!
THE CITY'S SPOTLESS AND FULL OF HOT BABES, RIGHT?
A WAITRESS IN THE CITY MUST BE THE HEIGHT OF STYLE!
GaaaaH!
THAT DOES IT!
WE HAVE TO GO DO ANYTHING BUT THIS NOW!
AH!
WHAT-EVER GETS HER OFF ME
Well, rubber and glue!
Oh, yeah?!
Yeah
WHAT?!

WHAT WAS WRONG WITH THOSE COMPLETE PINHEADS?!
MY LORDS...
NOT TO SPEAK ILL OF OTHERS...
..BUT YOU'RE PROBABLY BETTER OFF STAYING AWAY FROM THOSE THREE.
AND WHY IS THAT?
I can probably guess, but still.
THOSE PEOPLE HAVE NO PRIDE FOR TATARA, NOR CASTING.
THEY'RE LOWLY FOLK WHO ONLY KNOW HOW TO SWAGGER. EVERYONE DESPISES THEM.
THEN WHY IS HE THE HEAD OF THE VILLAGE?
IT'S BECAUSE HE INHERITED THE TETSUZAN HISHO--
HEY! DON'T SAY THINGS YOU'RE NOT ENTITLED TO SAY!

TETSUZAN HISHO...?
P-PLEASE FORGET WHAT I JUST SAID!


AND SINCE YOUKO-CHAN'S COME BACK TO LIFE, THERE GOES THAT PLAN. I JUST WISH THE VILLAGERS WERE MORE WILLING TO TELL ME ABOUT THE HEADQUARTERS ITSELF..
CHING
IT WON'T BE EASY FOR AN OUTSIDER LIKE ME TO GET IN.
BASED ON WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING THE TORATSUGUMI SOCIETY HQ SEEMS TO HAVE EVERY LOCAL FACE MEMORIZED
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
PHEW! I'M BEAT. I WONDER IF THE OTHER TWO ARE STILL GOING AT IT.

MAYBE IT'S THE ONE BRINGING THE CORPSES BACK TO LIFE!
CHING
MY BELLS!
THEY'RE SENSING YOUKAI!
CHING
OOF!
THIS MAY BE JUST WHAT I NEED TO LEAD ME TO KENSAKU--
JEEZ, HARUKA... YOU SCARED ME!
HUH?

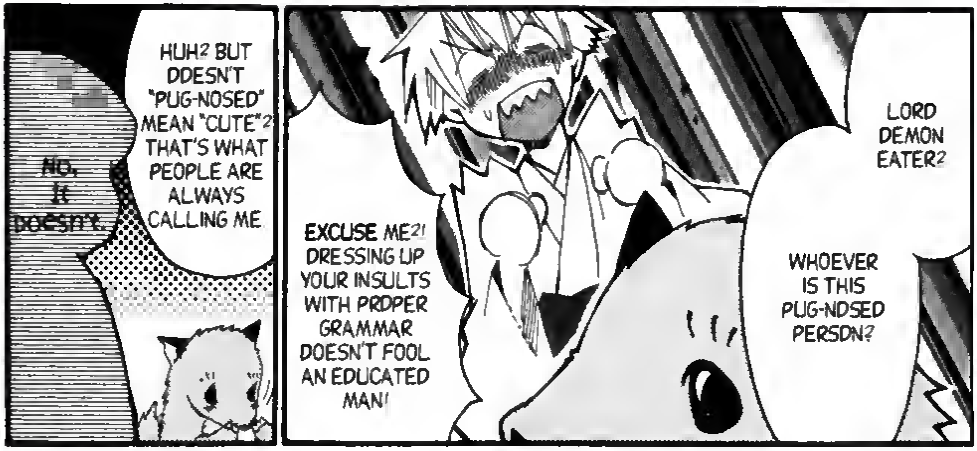
IT'LL BE FASTER TO FLY.
THERE!
CHING
CHING
I THINK IT'S COMING FROM AROUND HERE

!!
WHA...
LIGHT-
NING?

HARUKA?
IT'S...IT'S YOU!
HARUKA. WHO SHOT THAT IF YOU DIDN'T?
L--
L--
WHAT THE HELL?!
LORD DEMON EATER!

WE NEVER FORGOT ABOUT YOU, SIR NOT EVEN FOR A DAY!
I'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH!
I WANT YOU TO BRING DOWN YOUR BELOVED IRON HAMMER ON ME!
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE YOU AGAIN, LORD DEMON EATER!
SORRY FOR... WORRYING YOU.
He'd forgotten until Sugino mentioned them.
YOU KNOW- THOSE GUYS! THE ONES WHO HUNG OUT WITH YOU!
YOUR GRAY AND BROWN ESCORT GUYS!
UM...
RIGHT.
CALL US RAIJUU!*
ATTEN- DANTS?! HARUKA, SINCE WHEN ARE YOU IN THE BOURGEOIS CLASS?!
WE ARE LORD DEMON EATER'S ATTEN- DANTS!
ARE THESE FRIENDS OF YOURS, HARUKA?
Introduce me! C'mon, c'mon!
UH...
SURE. THESE ARE...UH...

*Mythological beasts that descend from the sky with a thunderbolt


LORD DEMON EATER?
WHOEVER IS THIS PUG-NOSED PERSON?
EXCUSE ME?! DRESSING UP YOUR INSULTS WITH PROPER GRAMMAR DOESN'T FOOL AN EDUCATED MAN!
HUH? BUT DOESN'T "PUG-NOSED" MEAN "CUTE"? THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS CALLING ME
NO, IT DOESN'T.

STAR! MOON! GET BACK HERE!
!!
ヒロカ
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OVER HERE?
DON'T TELL ME YOU TWO ARE--
WHAT?

BUT...
THEY HAVE NAMES. DID YOU SUB-ORDINATE THEM?!
SHOUSUKE?!
WE'RE SORRY, MASTER!
QUIT MESSING AROUND!
STAR! MOON!
HUH? OH, IT'S YOU GUYS. OUTSIDERS AREN'T ALLOWED HERE, SO SCRAM.
SHOUSUKE, SIR. YOU DON'T HAVE ANY MYSTIC POWERS!
BUT MASTER! WE HAVEN'T FINISHED TODAY'S QUOTA--
THAT DOES IT--NOW I'M PISSED! THE REST OF TODAY IS CANCELLED!
THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.
HOW DID YOU NAME THOSE YOUKAI IF YOU'RE NOT A MYSTIC?

ACK!
YOU FILTHY THING!
DON'T TOUCH ME!
KEEP IT TOGETHER HARUKA! DON'T GO BALLISTIC ON ME!
FILTHY...!
HE... HE CALLED A YOUKAI FILTHY!

IT'S TIME.
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
THE YOUKAI.
?
DID YOU SAY SOME-THING?
NEVER MIND WHAT DO WE HAVE TODAY?

ALL RIGHT.
.....
キリッ
THREE BODIES. AND THANK YOU FOR HAND-LING THEM.
LEND YOUR EARS TO MY VOICE...
ANSWER MY VOICE...
I...

...AM THE ONE WHO CALLS THE SOULS.
I AM TSUGUMI.

YES, I'VE HEARD OF HIM.
I'D LOVE TO MEET THE LEGENDARY DEMON-EATING TENGU.
I'M SURE HE'S A LOT LIKE ME
WHICH MEANS HE MUST BE WRETCHED

DEMON-EATING TENGU
SHINOBUYO FUJI SOUSHI
CHIMERA STAGE PART II

tactics

I DIDN'T ASK FOR YOUR LIFE STORY--I ASKED IF YOU COULD DO IT.
YES, SIR!
YES, MASTER SAKATA. OUR TATARA VILLAGE WILL COME TOGETHER TO--
HERE'S THE AMOUNT THE ARMY'S ASKING FOR THIS MONTH.
CAN YOU GET IT TO US BY THE GIVEN DATE?

FORGET THEM.
THEY'RE JUST PIECES IN A GAME.

BY THE WAY, SIR OO YOU KNOW THE THREE CHARACTERS WHO RECENTLY ENTERED OUR VILLAGE?
THE ONES BEING REVERED AS LIVING GODS BY THE PEOPLE

LOOK AT THE TIME! I HAVE TO RETURN TO THE CAPITOL
I'M COUNTING ON YOU
BUT CONSIDERING MY POSITION...

HUH?!
WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO YOU TWO?!
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WAAAH!
GYAAAH!
STOOOOP!
PRIORITIES, YOUKO-CHAN. I WASN'T ABOUT TO LET HARUKA REDUCE THIS VILLAGE TO A CRATER.
I CAN APPRECIATE THE KINK FACTOR, BUT WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO GOOF OFF.
WE NEED TO FIND KENSAKU.

KANTARO!
HM?
.....
I'LL LISTEN TO WHATEVER YOU SAY, JUST...PLEASE LET ME GO.
I'M SORRY.
HOLY...
WELL, YOU'VE CHANGED
AND I BET YOU BEING TAME IS A LOAD OFF KAN-CHAN'S MIND.
I'M FINE
ARE YOU SICK?!
YOU'RE ALL MEEK, HARUKA-CHAN! THAT ISN'T LIKE YOU!

IT'S TOO BAD WE DIDN'T TURN UP ANY NEW CLUES TODAY.
AT LEAST THE AFTERNOON WASN'T A COMPLETE WASTE.
KAN-CHAN MUST LOVE YOU LIKE THIS. ♡
THAT MAN ISN'T TREATING THEM WELL.
I WISH I COULD SAVE THEM, BUT A NAME BINDING IS HARD TO BREAK.
HN I WOULDN'T CALL THEM ESCORTS, SINCE THEY DIDN'T FOLLOW ME WHEN I LEFT
WELL, YOU WERE BEING NAUGHTY. △
WHAT A COINCIDENCE THAT YOUR OLD RAIJUU ESCORTS ARE IN THIS VILLAGE, HARUKA-CHAN.

tactics 7

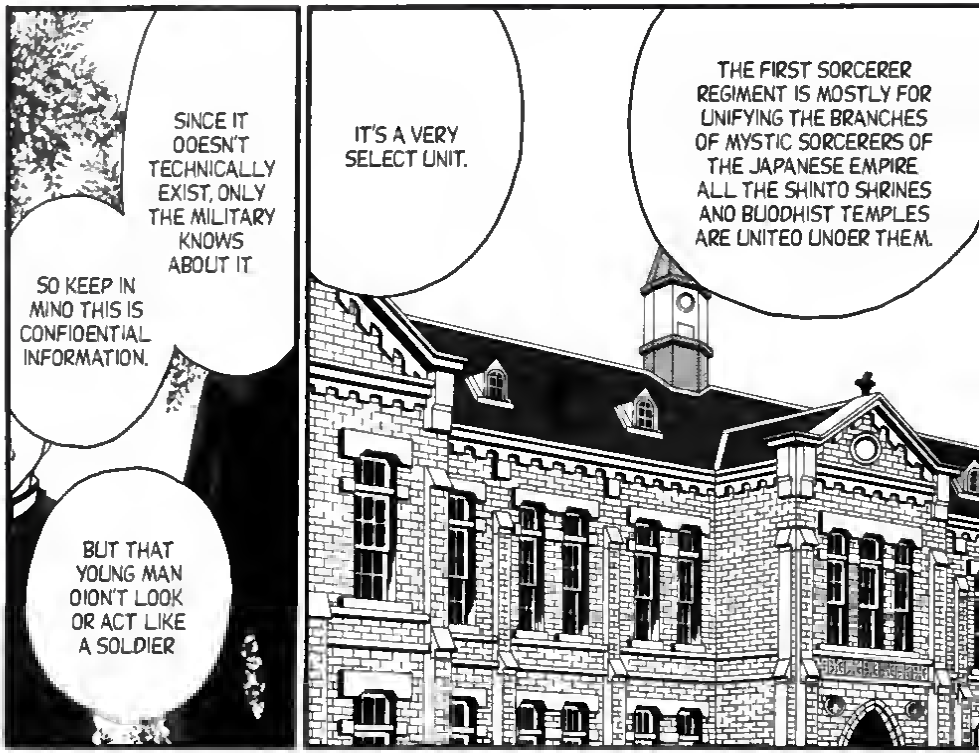
WHAT AN JERK! RIGHT, KAN-CHAN?
HE ACTUALLY SAID THAT?
CALLING YOUKAI "FILTHY" THAT BASTARD ISN'T FIT TO BE A MASTER!
NO KIDDING.
..CAN CUT TO THE BONE.
WORDS ARE LIKE WEAPONS. AND THAT KIND OF LANGUAGE..
KAN-CHAN ...?
S-SORRY. RIGHT.
I COULD KILL THEM FOR IT.
I CAN'T STAND PEOPLE WHO TREAT YOUKAI LIKE THEY'RE SOMETHING DIRTY.

.....
I COULD TELL HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY MYSTIC POWERS
BUT I WONDER HOW THAT MUSH-FOR-BRAINS SON MANAGED TO NAME THE POOR GUYS?
IT IS WEIRD.
IN ORDER TO GIVE A YOUKAI A NAME, YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO AT LEAST SEE THE YOUKAI THAT'S RULE ONE
I'VE BEEN TURNING IT OVER AND OVER IN MY HEAD
AND SINCE THE YOUKAI WHO CAN USUALLY BE SEEN BY HUMANS HAVE BEWITCHING PROPERTIES, THEY'RE GENERALLY NOT GOING TO BE VERY COOPERATIVE

YEAH... NO FRIGGIN' WAY HE DID ALL THAT.
AGREED.
AND THAT'S NOT EVEN TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE CONSENT HE SHOULD BE TRYING TO GAIN.
IN ORDER TO KEEP A YOUKAI FROM RUNNING AWAY DURING THE APPLICATION OF A NAME, THE HUMAN HAS TO HAVE SOME KIND OF POWER OR SORCERY THAT CAN RESTRAIN THE YOUKAI OTHERWISE, HE'S UP CRAP CREEK

THEN WE NEED TO CONSIDER ...
...THAT SOMEONE WITH MYSTIC POWERS LENT HIM A HAND IN ALL THIS.
OW!

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, ROOKIE? APOLOGIZE WHEN YOU BUMP INTO SOMEONE!
HMPH.
PARDON ME.
HEY, I'M NOT DONE WITH--
LEAVE HIM. HE'S A MEMBER OF THE FIRST SORCERER REGIMENT OF THE IMPERIAL GUARDS
WHAT UNIT IS THAT? I'VE NEVER HEARD OF IT.
YOU WERE JUST DISPATCHED TO THIS CITY, RIGHT? LET ME FILL YOU IN.


SINCE IT DOESN'T TECHNICALLY EXIST, ONLY THE MILITARY KNOWS ABOUT IT
SO KEEP IN MIND THIS IS CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.
BUT THAT YOUNG MAN DIDN'T LOOK OR ACT LIKE A SOLDIER
IT'S A VERY SELECT UNIT.
THE FIRST SORCERER REGIMENT IS MOSTLY FOR UNIFYING THE BRANCHES OF MYSTIC SORCERERS OF THE JAPANESE EMPIRE ALL THE SHINTO SHRINES AND BUDDHIST TEMPLES ARE UNITED UNDER THEM.

KEEP AWAY FROM THEM IF YOU WANT TO LIVE A LONG LIFE
I TOLD YOU— LEAVE IT. THE LEADER OF THE FIRST SORCERER REGIMENT IS RAIKOU MINAMOTO
HOLY...
REALLY?

THAT UNIT...
...IS UNDER THE DIRECT SUPERVISION OF THE HIGHEST AUTHORITIES.
KIMISHIGE SAKATA, REPORTING. I HAVE NEWS ABOUT KANTAROU ICHINOMIYA IN THE TATARA VILLAGE.
THERE'S MY LITTLE UPSTART. COME FOR A GOOD SPANKING?
EXCUSE ME?
HEY. SAKATA.
DID YOU SEE THIS?
THESE ARE REPORTS ON WHAT ICHINOMIYA'S PARTY IS UP TO.

THEY'RE NOTHING LIKE YOU MASTER RAIKOU
ICHINOMIYA-SENSEI WRITES BOOKS THAT DON'T SELL--WHEN HE MAKES DEADLINE AT ALL. YOUKO'S A YOUKAI WHO WORKS AS A WAITRESS, AND THE DEMON EATER DOES NOTHING BUT NAP ALL DAY.
HOW THE HELL CAN THEY CALL THEMSELVES JAPANESE CITIZENS WHEN ALL THEY DO IS INSULT THE JAPANESE WORK SPIRIT?
KANTAROU ICHINOMIYA VISITS A GRAVE THREE TIMES A MONTH...?
AND THE DEMON-EATING TENGU REALLY WON'T LEAVE THE HOUSE. HE MIGHT BE ONTO US.
HM?

RIGHT, SIR.
AND NOW YOU'RE BORING ME TO TEARS, FOUR-EYES.
VERY SORRY, SIR.
GOOD CATCH ON THAT POINT, BUT YOU'RE NOT ONE TO TALK ABOUT WHAT'S "NORMAL."
DO PEOPLE USUALLY VISIT A GRAVE THAT OFTEN?
ESPE-CIALLY THE SAME ONE?
OKAY... I THINK I CAN DO THAT.
IF YOU CAN ASK IT IN UNDER TEN WORDS.
MAY I ASK A QUES-TION?
UH, MASTER RAIKOU?
THEN DON'T REFER TO IT SO CA-SUALLY. AND THAT WAS MORE THAN TEN WORDS.
WELL... NO.
HAVE YOU EVER KILLED A MAN?
WHY DON'T YOU JUST KILL KANTAROU ICHINOMIYA?
I CAN'T IMAGINE KILLING ONE CIVILIAN WOULD BE ALL THAT MUCH TROUBLE.
IT'S AN INTERESTING QUESTION, THOUGH, SO I'LL INDULGE IT.
AH.. SORRY.

BUT I CAN'T JUST WALK UP TO HIM. IT WOULD BE ODD FOR ME TO MEET WITH A COMMON HERETIC. THERE'S NO BASIS OF INTEREST TO BEGIN WITH AND WE'VE NEVER MET.
IT'S TRUE THAT IF HE WERE GONE, OUR PLANS WOULD RUN A LITTLE SMOOTHER.
SO THE DEMON EATER—
SORRY FOR THE WAIT. MAJOR GENERAL MINAMOTO. PLEASE COME INSIDE.
YOU SURE TOOK YOUR SWEET TIME, EDWARDS!
THEN WHY?
IF ICHINOMIYA DIED, YOU'D EVEN OBTAIN THE DEMON-EATING TENGU WOULDN'T YOU?
IT DOESN'T WORK LIKE THAT.
IF THE MASTER DIES WITHOUT CANCELING THE YOUKAI'S NAME, THE YOUKAI'S POWERS WILL END UP LIMITED FROM THAT.

UM...
THE PRICE OF BEING THOROUGH, I SUPPOSE.
BAH. HOW DID IT GO?
THE INJURY WAS MORE STUBBORN THAN I THOUGHT I'M SORRY ABOUT THAT
DON'T APOLOGIZE. I'M HAPPY.
M--
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, SAKATA?
LOOK. WATANABE'S INJURY FROM WHEN I WAS ATTACKED BY THE DEMON EATER ON REIZAN STILL HASN'T HEALED.

WATANABE'S RIGHT ARM IS AS STRONG AS THE ARM OF THE INFAMOUS SHUTENDOUJI, THE RED BOSS-DEMON OF LEGEND!
HE CAN GET SHOT OR CUT, AND IT'LL GO RIGHT BACK TO THE WAY IT WAS.
And after I JUST bound that up...
SIGH... YOU'RE CAUSING TROUBLE AGAIN, MAJOR GENERAL.
MASTER RAIKOU?!
MASTER RAIKOU...
HA HA!
DID YOU KNOW?

EXACTLY.
SO THIS PROVES THAT DESPITE THE DEMON EATER'S POWERS BEING LIMITED HE STILL HAS ENOUGH FORCE TO LEAVE AN INJURY LIKE THAT ON A SUPERNATURAL ARM?
...IMAGINE WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE IF HE GOT ALL HIS POWER BACK.
STREAK
IF HE HAS THIS MUCH POWER RIGHT NOW...
KEEP IN MIND THAT WE'RE TRYING TO KEEP OTHERS BESIDES THE DEMON EATER OUT OF THIS SO WE DON'T INCREASE OUR INJURIES.
BUT MASTER.
Please don't lick that.
I'M TINGLING IN ANTICIPATION WATANABE

REMEMBER YOUR PLACE, WATANABE!
PERHAPS, BUT--
BUT WE CAN'T FORGET THAT THE OEMON EATER SEEMS OVERLY FONO OF HUMANS
WE DON'T KNOW IF THINGS WILL GO AS WE EXPECT.
SAKATA, IT SEEMS AN AIR OF UNREST IS FLOWING THROUGH THAT VILLAGE. WHAT HAPP-ENED?
N-NOTHING THAT CONCERNS YOU!
IF MASTER RAIKOU HAON'T SHOWN COMPASSION FOR YOU, SOMEONE OF YOUR ILK WOULDN'T EVEN BE HERE!
YOU'RE NOT IN CHARGE!
O-OF COURSE, SIR!
WE'VE BEEN FRIENOS SINCE WE WERE KIOS RIGHT?
DON'T LET ME DOWN KIMISHIGE
Easy, boys.
SAKATA'S IN CHARGE OF THE VILLAGE, WATANABE-- LET HIM DO HIS JOB
YES, SIR.. MY APOLO-GIES.

NOW CAN YOU HEAL THIS WOUND COMPLETELY, LITTLE PRIEST?
WITH THE POWER OF THAT SECRET SOCIETY OF YOURS?
THE POWER OF OUR SOCIETY GAVE WATANABE-SAN THAT ARM IN THE FIRST PLACE.
GIVEN THE NAME OF THE SKULL OF WISDOM...
...ALLOW ME TO SHOW YOU JUST HOW WELL I CAN HEAL THAT WOUND.

tactics 7

DID YOU THINK OF A WAY TO CANCEL THEIR NAMES?
I'D LIKE TO TALK TO THE RAIJUU PAIR FIRST--YOU KNOW, LISTEN TO THEIR SIDE OF THE STORY.

WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED. I HAVE THE FEELING THAT THE ONE WHO NAMED THEM HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE TORATSUGUMI SOCIETY.
IT MIGHT BE THE CONNECTION WE NEED TO FIND KENSAKU.
BESIDES--IF WE KNOW WHO NAMED THEM, I HAVE A MUCH BETTER SHOT AT BREAKING THE NAME BOND

WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED..

WHAT SHOULDN'T HE DO?
ANYWAY, SINCE SHOUSUKE'S THEIR MASTER, THERE'S ONE THING HE REALLY SHOULDN'T DO. WE'LL SEE IF WE CAN GET HIM TO CANCEL THE NAMES FOR US.
DIE WITHOUT CANCELING A YOUKAI'S NAME.
HARUKA?

I WAS JUST THINKING.
I'M ACTUALLY GLAD THAT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO NAMED ME
!
OH... SORRY.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, HARUKA? YOU LOOK SICK!
WHY HAVE YOU BEEN SO UNCHARACTERISTICALLY SWEET TO ME LATELY?!
IT'S FREAKING ME OUT, HARUKA!
WHAT IS IT WITH YOU?
HUH?

WHAT? WHAT KIND OF COM-PLAINT IS...
I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN YOU GO ALL DOCILE! I CAN TELL YOU'RE JUST DOING IT TO AVOID SOME ISSUE!
IT ALL STARTED WITH WHATEVER HAPPENED ON THAT RAINY DAY, DIDN'T IT?! WHY CAN'T YOU JUST TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED?!
THIS IS RIDICU-LOUS YOU WANT ME TO BE YOUR FRIEND, THEN YOUR SLAVE, THEN NEITHER?
AND YOU THINK I'M LYING TO YOU?!
I DIDN'T SAY THAT.
I DON'T THINK YOU'RE GOOD ENOUGH AT LYING TO DO IT TO MY FACE.
I CAN'T STAND WHAT YOU'RE DOING TO ME!

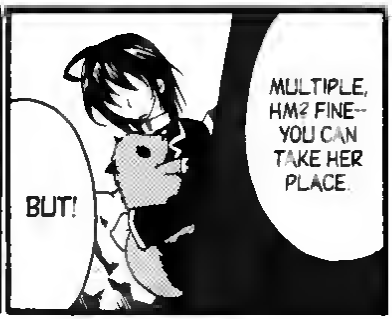
YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND.
I WAS TRYING TO MAKE YOU HAPPY. WHY ARE YOU SO ANGRY?
KANTA-ROU...
DON'T CHANGE YOUR ATTI-TUDE! DON'T CHANGE THE WAY YOU TREAT ME!
NOT NOW, AND NOT EVER!
NOW I JUST DON'T CARE.
HARUKA!

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, HARUKA.
I KNOW...
BUT WHEN YOU'RE KIND TO ME...
..I JUST START TO HATE MYSELF MORE
I'M SORRY, MASTER!
YOU'RE USELESS AND YOU WANT A BREAK?! HOW DARE YOU!
NOW GET BACK TO WORK!

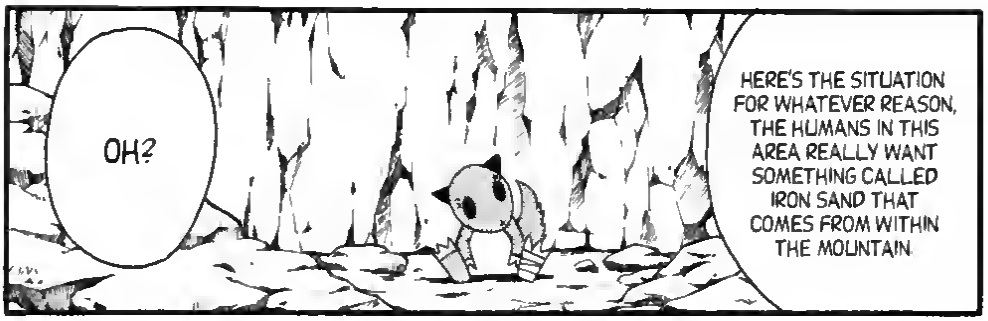
Y-YOU SON OF A...!
I'LL DO HER SHARE, SO PLEASE LET HER HAVE TODAY OFF!
BUT I CAN'T WORK WITH MY FOOT INJURED...
MASTER!
EEE!
SHUT UP! MORE WORKY, LESS TALK--
OW!
I'LL WORK IN HER PLACE.
JUST LET HER REST.
LORD Deeee-mon Eater!
I'LL DO IT.
WHAT?!
I TOLD YOU-- THERE'S NO TRESPASSING HERE!

I'LL GIVE YOU MULTIPLE TIMES WHATEVER YOU GET FROM HER.
ALL RIGHT?

IF YOU CAN'T LIVE UP TO YOUR PROMISE...
...YOU HAVE TO PAY ME BACK AS MUCH AS YOU FALL SHORT.


MULTIPLE, HM? FINE-- YOU CAN TAKE HER PLACE.
BUT!

FINE, BUT...I'M NOT EVEN SURE WHAT WE'RE DOING HERE.
YOU DIDN'T CHECK FIRST?!

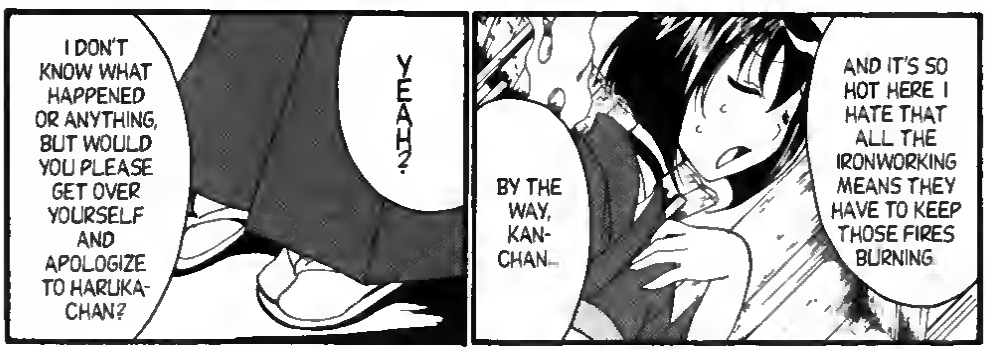

HERE'S THE SITUATION FOR WHATEVER REASON, THE HUMANS IN THIS AREA REALLY WANT SOMETHING CALLED IRON SAND THAT COMES FROM WITHIN THE MOUNTAIN.
OH?

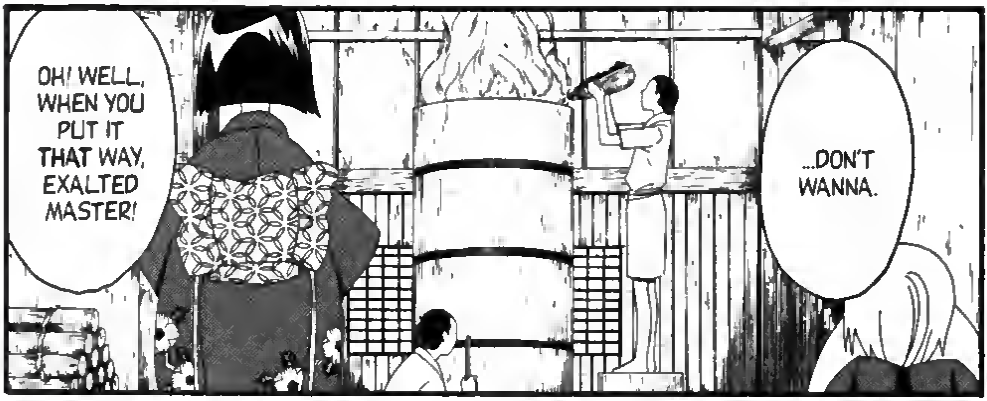
WHAT DO THEY DO WITH THE IRON SAND ONCE THEY HAVE IT?
CHUNKS OF STEEL?
HM? I THINK THEY MAKE.. CHUNKS OF SOMETHING. U U
SINCE THEY WANT SO MUCH, THEY BREAK DOWN THE MOUNTAIN LIKE THIS, MAKE SAND, AND PUT IT IN THAT WATERWAY TO GET "IRON SAND" FROM IT
ANYWAY. OUR JOB IS TO THROW BOLTS OF LIGHTNING ONTO THE FACE OF THIS CLIFF.
SO YOU'RE BREAKING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN WITH YOUR POWER TO MAKE SAND IT MUST BE MORE EFFICIENT THAN HOWEVER THE HUMANS DO IT.
BUT...
THEY'VE TORN APART THE MOUNTAINS FOR THIS.
HMPH...
THEY SURE HAVE THE HUMANS HERE CUT DOWN THE TREES, TOO.
AND THEY'RE ALWAYS BURNING FIRES.

THIS IS SO TYPICAL OF HUMANS ...!

THUD THUMP
THUDUMP
THUDUMP
IS LORD DEMON EATER REALLY ANGRY?

WE STILL HAVEN'T GOTTEN ANY ANSWERS ABOUT KENSAKU OR THE TORATSUGUMI SOCIETY.
THIS INVESTIGATION'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE, KAN-CHAN.


I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED OR ANYTHING, BUT WOULD YOU PLEASE GET OVER YOURSELF AND APOLOGIZE TO HARUKA-CHAN?
YEAH?
BY THE WAY, KAN-CHAN...
AND IT'S SO HOT HERE I HATE THAT ALL THE IRONWORKING MEANS THEY HAVE TO KEEP THOSE FIRES BURNING.


OH! WELL, WHEN YOU PUT IT THAT WAY, EXALTED MASTER!
...DON'T WANNA.

PHEW...!

YOU NEVER WERE ONE WITH A LONG ATTEN-TION SPAN, LORD DEMON EATER
THIS IS EXHAUSTING. I DON'T LIKE HAVING TO REGULATE THE SIZE OF THE LIGHTNING BLAST AND WHERE IT LANDS.
SHUT UP.

THAT REMINDS ME. NOW THAT YOU'RE FREE OF YOUR SEAL, WILL YOU COME TO SEE OUR MOTHER?
OH RIGHT.
?
ONCE I GET HIM TO CANCEL YOUR NAMES, I'M PLANNING TO BEAT HIM SENSELESS.
THAT SHOUSUKE GUY HASN'T COME BACK YET.
THAT'S BECAUSE HE ONLY APPEARS AT THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF THE DAY
THAT'S BECAUSE IT'S THE ONLY TIME YOU'LL DANCE WITH US, LORD DEMON EATER. THAT'S THE PART I LOVE MOST!
. I'M SURE SHE'S VERY WORRIED
PLEASE SEE HER. MOTHER WON'T SAY ANYTHING, BUT...
ME, TOO!
MOON VIEWING, HUH? YOU GUYS ALWAYS DID ENJOY THAT.
AND EVERYBODY BACK AT THE FOREST WANTS TO SEE YOU! THEY WANT TO HOLD ANOTHER MOON VIEWING FESTIVAL!
HEH...
LORD DEMON EATER?

ONCE I START TALKING WITH YOU TWO, I CAN REMEMBER MY PAST LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY.
EVEN THOUGH I THINK ABOUT THAT LIFE LIKE IT WAS NOTHING BUT A DREAM.
I HAVE TO ACCEPT...
...THAT MY PAST REALLY HAPPENED
EH?
PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER! WE'RE BUSY HERE!
DON'T YOU FEEL BAD FOR POOR KENSAKU'S MOTHER?
THAT DOES IT KAN-CHAN!
GYAAH!

LET'S GET SOME AIR--THAT MIGHT HELP.
UNFORTUNATELY, WE'RE REALLY AT A DEAD END HERE.
THAT'S IT! NOW, LESS CONCEITED THIS TIME.
IT'S TIME TO PROVE HOW BRILLIANT AND SUCCESSFUL I AM!
THAT'S RIGHT. SHE'S PUT HER MONEY ON MY PROWESS!
THAT PERFECTLY COINCIDES WITH MY RENEWED SENSE OF PURPOSE! NOW I JUST HAVE TO FOLLOW THEM TO--
ガラ ガラ ガラ
ARE THOSE PEOPLE WHO CAME TO RESURRECT A DEAD BODY?!
HUH?
UM... SURE.
ALTHOUGH THAT REALLY ISN'T A GOO'S AREA OF EXPERTISE.
THE BELLOWS ARE ACTING UP PLEASE BESTOW US WITH YOUR HELP!
YOU MUST BE ONE OF THE LIVING GOOS.
LADY KANAYA-KOGAMI!
LORD WHITE SNAKE!
FREEZE!!

PLEASE BRING HER BACK TO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING!
MY MIYAKO...
MIYAKO KATSURAGI..
EEEEEK!
WHO DO YOU think YOU are?! I WAS ere first!
AS DO I!
PLEASE WAIT! I HAVE MORE PLEAS, LADY KANAYAKOGAMI!
ガラガラ
C'MON, KAN-CHAN TIME TO TAG ALONG!
What?! Save me!
Bye!
THANKS FOR COVERING, YOUKO-CHAN.
WE'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO A FRIEND OF OURS, LORD DEMON EATER.

IT'S US, THE RAIJUU! ARE YOU IN?
HERE WE ARE, LORD DEMON EATER!
WHEN WE TOLD HER ABOUT YOU, SHE SAID SHE'D LIKE TO BE YOUR FRIEND.
FRIEND, HUH?
DEMON EATER...
A FORCE FIELD? BUT IT'S A WEAK ONE...
FLAP
YOU'RE...
...THE LEGENDARY DEMON-EATING TENGU, AREN'T YOU?
WHAT?!

I THOUGHT YOUR FATE WAS LIKE MINE.
BUT YOU'RE EVEN MORE MISERABLE THAN I IMAGINED.
YOU POOR THING.
THE HUMANS ARE COMING. HIDE.
!
WAIT A MINUTE.
NOW I SEE.
THEY WERE HOLDING THE CEREMONIES IN A PLACE OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE.

NO WONDER I COULDN'T FIND IT WITHIN THE VILLAGE BOUNDARIES.
HUH?
IT'S LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE GOING TO START THE CEREMONY THERE.
THAT'S THE DOLL!
!!

TH-THAT SCREAM!
AGH!

I... MISSED... YOU....
THAT BLACK SMOKE JUST NOW WAS A SPIRIT. WHICH MEANS--
FA... THER...
MIYAKO!
THE DOLL'S TALKING.
MIYAKO!
WAIT A MINUTE.
THE DEAD GIRL ACTUALLY CAME BACK TO LIFE?!

I WONDER WHERE THEY'RE BRINGING IT?
AND THAT'S THE COFFIN, RIGHT?

WHAT'S A SHED DOING OUT HERE?
IT'S UNLOCKED.
WHOOPS! GUESS I LOST THEM. HA HA... EH
For a city boy like me, these mountain paths are confusing
HUFF
HUFF

THE DOOR...!
CHINC
CHINC
CHINC
YIKES!
EEEK!
GET OFF
GET OFF
GET OFF!

SAVE... ME...
IT'S SO... COLD...
SHa!
SA...
TOU!
Rin PYOU!
IT HURTS...
I MISS... YOU...!
MOMMY...
仏説摩訶般若波羅密真心経
観自在菩薩
行深般若波羅密多時
照見五蘊皆空
度一切苦厄
*CHANTING

色即是空 空即是色
受想行識 亦復如是
舍利子 是諸法空相 不生不滅
不垢不浄 不増不減
是故空中無色 無受想行識
無眼耳鼻舌身意 無色声香味触法
無眼界 乃至無意識界
無無明 亦無無明尽
乃至無老死 亦無老死尽
無苦集滅道 無智亦無得 以無所得故
菩提薩埵 依般若波羅密多故
心無罣礙 無罣礙故 無有恐怖
遠離一切 顛倒夢想 究竟涅槃
三世諸仏 依般若波羅密多故
得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提
故知般若波羅密多
是大神呪 是大明呪 是無上呪
是無等等呪 能除一切苦 真実不虚
故説般若波羅密多呪 即説呪曰
羯諦羯諦 波羅羯諦
波羅僧羯諦 菩提薩婆訶 般若心経

I THOUGHT YOU ALL WENT BACK WITH YOUR FAMILIES.
WHY COULDN'T YOU FULLY BECOME SPIRITS..
. AND WHY'D YOU TO RETURN TO THIS VILLAGE?

LORD DEMON EATER! WE FEEL A STRONG YOUKAI ENERGY COMING FROM OVER THERE!
HUFF
HUFF

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
LORD DEMON EATER?!

MOST THINGS I WANT CAN COME TRUE IF I JUST ASK
I WONDER IF MY WISH WILL COME TRUE THIS TIME, TOO
THE WORD YOU WANT, MASTER RAIKOU, IS NOT "WISH"...
...BUT "PREDICTION"

DEMON-
EATING TENGU
SHINOBUYO
FUJI SOUSHI
CHIMERA STAGE
PART III

THAT CERTAINLY WAS A SURPRISE FOLLOWING THAT POWERFUL YOUKAI ENERGY AND FINDING YOU.
WELL, I'M GLAD YOU DID. BEING TRAPPED IN THERE WASN'T MY IDEA OF A GOOD TIME.
.....

I DON'T.
AND I WASN'T.
WOW.
むーん
AND I DIDN'T KNOW YOU LIKED PLAYING WITH DOLLS, LORD ICHINOMIYA.

CAN I CALL YOU CHIMERA-CHAN?
HELLO THERE! I'M KANTAROU ICHINOMIYA.
YOU'RE THE ONE CALLING BACK THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD IN THIS VILLAGE, RIGHT? NICE TO MEET YOU.
H-HOW DID YOU KNOW WHAT I AM?
YOU'RE A MORE FAMOUS YOUKAI THAN YOU REALIZE.
THE CHIMERA HAS THE HEAD OF A WOLF, THE BODY OF A RACCOON, THE LEGS OF A TIGER AND THE TAIL OF A SNAKE.
SHE'S A YOUKAI WITH A VOICE WROUGHT FROM WILD BIRDS--WHICH IS WHERE WE GET THE TERM "TORATSUGUMI."
THAT VOICE HAS THE POWER TO CALL FORTH BODILESS SPIRITS.

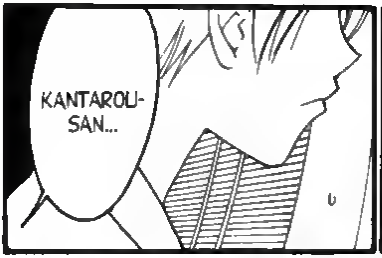
WHEN I FIRST HEARD THE NAME OF YOUR SOCIETY, I THOUGHT MY CONNECTION WAS TOO FAR-FETCHED—I DIDN'T IMAGINE I WOULD EVER MEET A YOUKAI AS POWERFUL AS YOU.
DID YOU KNOW THERE WAS A MILITARY COMMANDER NAMED YORIMASA MINAMOTO WHO ONCE EXTERMINATED A CHIMERA LIKE YOU?
..MINAMOTO?
OH, YORIMASA WAS A DESCENDENT OF YORIMITSU MINAMOTO FROM THE HEIAN PERIOD BUT SINCE HE CAME FROM THE HEIKE FAMILY, HE HAD A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT POSITION FROM YORIMITSU
UM.. SORRY.
HE DOESN'T KNOW WHEN TO SHUT UP BUT HE WON'T HURT YOU AND HE'S TECHNICALLY MY MASTER
TECHNI-CALLY
PAT
HARUKA...
HMPH.
SO YOU'RE THE DEMON-EATING TENGU'S MASTER.
OH!
YOUR COLORING IS SO PRETTY.
THANK YOU, CHIMERA-CHAN

AND HER MASTER IS WORKING HER HARD APPARENTLY
YOU MEAN YOU HAVE A NAME?!
HUH?
MY NAME IS TSUGUMI
SHE CAN'T EVEN GET PAST THE PATHETIC FORCE FIELD SET UP AROUND THIS AREA
IT LOOKS LIKE THE AFTERMATH OF THE CEREMONIES IS PAINFUL FOR HER AT LEAST
SHE WON'T SAY HOW SHE GOT SO HURT
HUFF
……NGH…
HUFF
WHO'S YOUR MASTER? TSUGUMI-CHAN?

LADY TSUGUMI! ARE YOU OKAY?!
YEAH.. I'M JUST A BIT TIRED.

TSUGUMI-CHAN?!

YOU MUST'VE USED TOO MUCH YOUKAI POWER IN THE LAST CEREMONY.
YOU NEED TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF YOURSELF, ALL RIGHT?

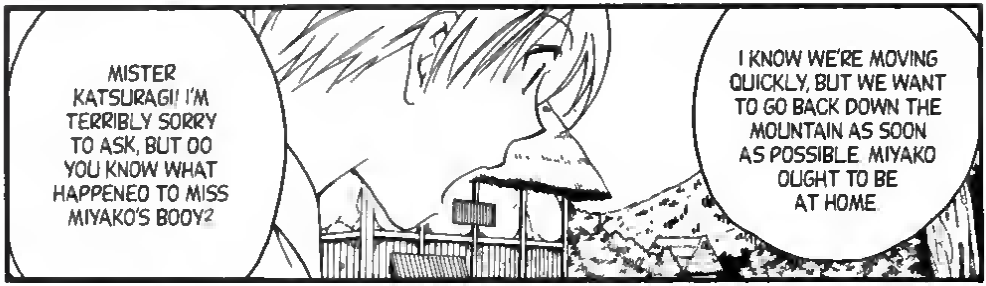

KANTAROU-SAN...

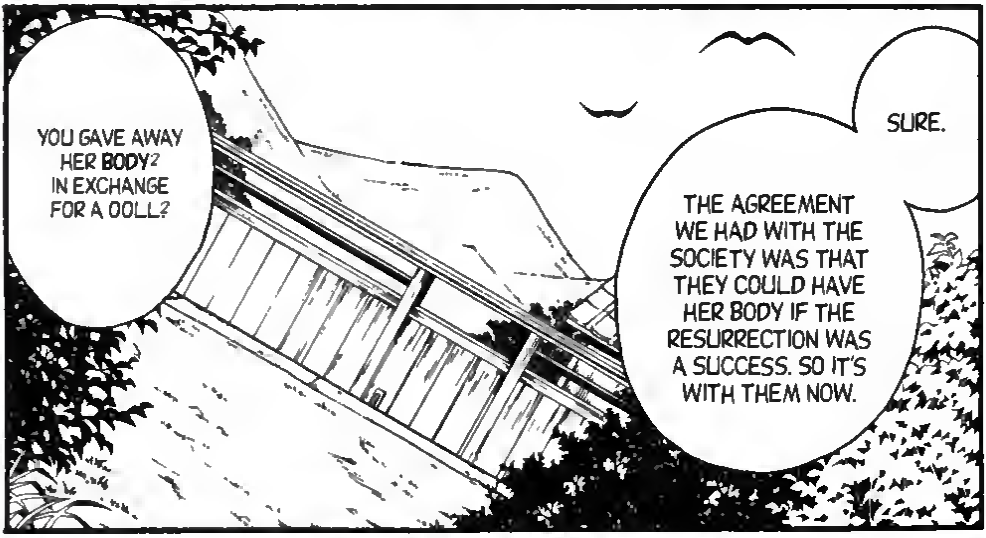
..FINE
I'LL STAY WITH THEM A LITTLE LONGER.
I'M GOING BACK TO THE VILLAGE WHAT ABOUT YOU, HARUKA?

I WANT TO TALK MORE WITH YOU
WILL YOU COME AGAIN?

OF COURSE I WILL.
UGH. HOW COM-PLETELY AWK-WARD.
ALTHOUGH IT'S MY FAULT FOR BLOWING UP AT HARUKA EARLIER
...THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE HAD AN ACTUAL FIGHT WITH ANYONE.
I DON'T KNOW HOW WE'RE SUPPOSED TO MAKE UP.

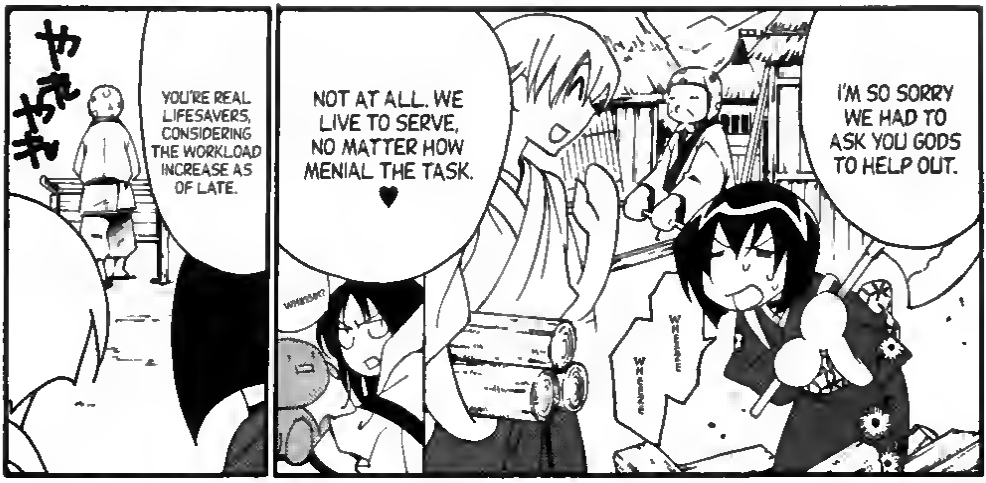
HEY, KAN-CHAN!
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR EARLIER OUR DAUGHTER WAS SAFELY RESURRECTED!
BY THE WAY, MY NAME IS TADASHI KATSURAGI.
THIS IS MY WIFE UKIE, AND MY DAUGHTER, MIYAKO.
UM, NICE TO MEET YOU.
FA.. THER..
WHO...IS THIS...?
HE'S THE GOO I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT, MIYAKO.
IS THAT OOLL REALLY TALKING, KAN-CHAN? OIO YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT'S GOING ON?
SORTA. WE'LL TALK LATER.

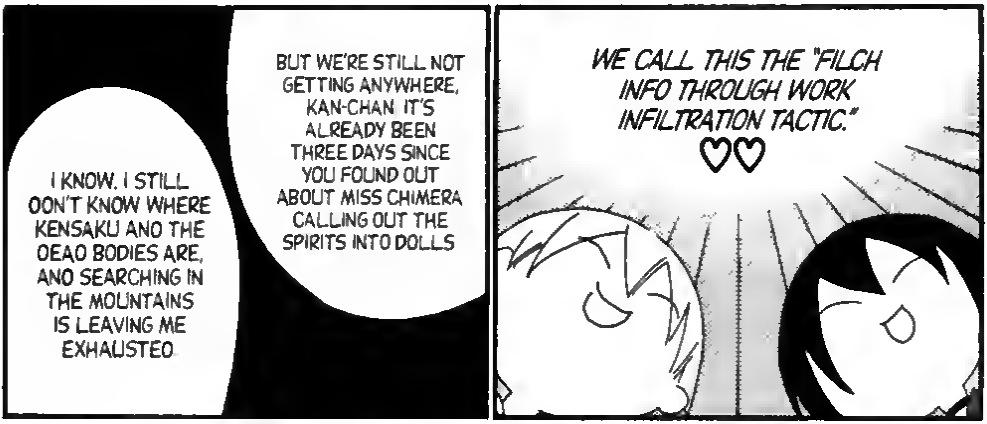

MISTER KATSURAGI! I'M TERRIBLY SORRY TO ASK, BUT DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO MISS MIYAKO'S BODY?
I KNOW WE'RE MOVING QUICKLY, BUT WE WANT TO GO BACK DOWN THE MOUNTAIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. MIYAKO OUGHT TO BE AT HOME.

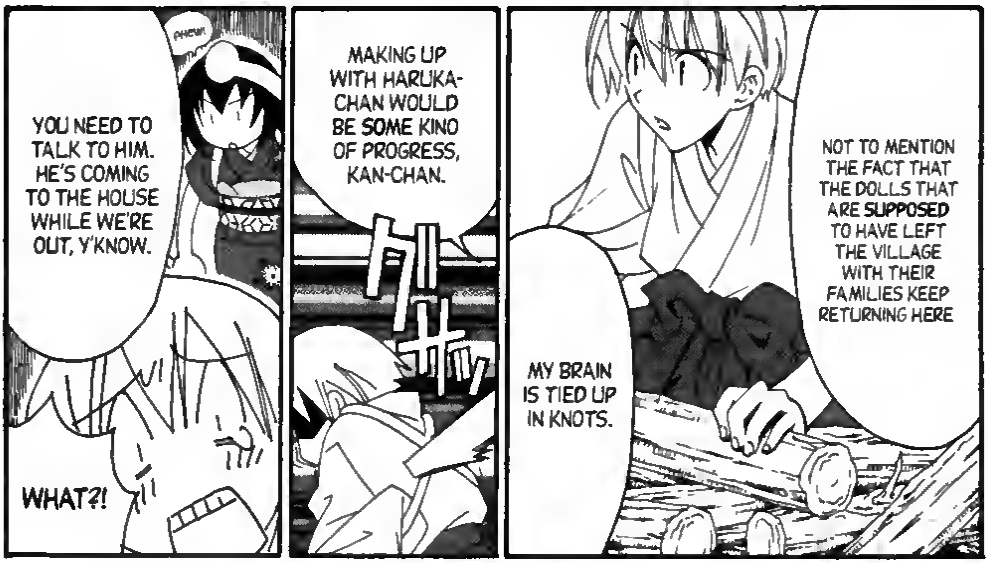

YOU GAVE AWAY HER BODY? IN EXCHANGE FOR A DOLL?
SURE.
THE AGREEMENT WE HAD WITH THE SOCIETY WAS THAT THEY COULD HAVE HER BODY IF THE RESURRECTION WAS A SUCCESS. SO IT'S WITH THEM NOW.

I DON'T GET IT. HOW COULD YOU LET GO OF YOUR DEAD DAUGHTER'S BODY?
BESIDES— HUMAN DEATH IS JUST A FACT OF LIFE
THANKS AGAIN!
I DON'T CARE WHAT THE VESSEL IS.
MY LITTLE MIYAKO'S ALIVE IN HERE, AND THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.

YOU'RE THE HUMAN HERE SO I'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOUR WORD ON THAT.
I GUESS IT WOULD BE PRETTY LONELY LIVING WITHOUT THE ONE YOU LOVE.
HUMANS HAVE A LONG HISTORY OF TRYING TO BEND THAT RULE FOR THE SAKE OF LOVE.
DETERMINATION IS DIRECTLY PROPORTIONAL TO THE DEPTH OF HUMAN SENTIMENT.
NOBODY CAN TRULY ESCAPE FROM ITS POWER.
BUT I FIRMLY BELIEVE...
...THAT DEATH IS AN ABSOLUTE.
HIYAAH!


ヤバヤバ
YOU'RE REAL LIFESAVERS, CONSIDERING THE WORKLOAD INCREASE AS OF LATE.
NOT AT ALL. WE LIVE TO SERVE, NO MATTER HOW MENIAL THE TASK.
WHEEZE
WHEEZE
I'M SO SORRY WE HAD TO ASK YOU GODS TO HELP OUT.


I KNOW. I STILL DON'T KNOW WHERE KENSAKU AND THE DEAD BODIES ARE, AND SEARCHING IN THE MOUNTAINS IS LEAVING ME EXHAUSTED
BUT WE'RE STILL NOT GETTING ANYWHERE, KAN-CHAN. IT'S ALREADY BEEN THREE DAYS SINCE YOU FOUND OUT ABOUT MISS CHIMERA CALLING OUT THE SPIRITS INTO DOLLS
WE CALL THIS THE "FILCH INFO THROUGH WORK INFILTRATION TACTIC."


PHEW!
YOU NEED TO TALK TO HIM. HE'S COMING TO THE HOUSE WHILE WE'RE OUT, Y'KNOW.
WHAT?!
MAKING UP WITH HARUKA-CHAN WOULD BE SOME KIND OF PROGRESS, KAN-CHAN.
MY BRAIN IS TIED UP IN KNOTS.
NOT TO MENTION THE FACT THAT THE DOLLS THAT ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE LEFT THE VILLAGE WITH THEIR FAMILIES KEEP RETURNING HERE

BUT THE WOMEN CAN HELP WITH THE WORKLOAD AND UP PRODUCTIVITY.
YOU'RE JUST STUCK IN THE OLD WAYS THINK OF THE FUTURE!
YOU KNOW IT'S TABOO TO ALLOW WOMEN INTO THE IRONWORKS GROUNDS!
HOW DARE YOU!
THEN HE'S ACTIVELY AVOIDING ME. WOE...
WELL, FOOD KEEPS DISAPPEARING AND THERE RE SIGNS THAT THE BATH'S BEEN USED
ARE YOU SURE?!
THAT'S JUST GREAT!
WHY SHOULD WE CARE WHAT SOME DEAD PEOPLE THINK?
WHAT WOULD YOUR ANCESTORS THINK IF THEY SAW YOU?!
THEN WHY DON'T YOU HELP OUT?! ALL YOU EVER DO IS BARK ORDERS-- YOU'VE NEVER GOTTEN YOUR HANDS DIRTY!
WHA..?!
AND YOU DON'T EVEN REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE DOING TO THE MOUNTAIN!
YOU PATHETIC SON! ALL YOU DO IS SEND MONSTERS TO TEAR DOWN THE MOUNTAIN WHILE YOU CHASE AFTER WOMEN'S SKIRTS!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE MOUNTAIN? I'M NOT ABOUT TO SPEND A FORTUNE RELOCATING THIS ENTIRE VILLAGE-- YOU'LL WORK WITH WHAT YOU'VE GOT
SHUT UP!
CHIEF!
IT'S SO TORN UP WE CAN'T STAY HERE ANY--

ACK!
WE'RE IN CHARGE HERE, NOT--
OH, PLEASE NOT THE OUTSIDERS AGAIN.
LORD WHITE SNAKE!
STEP
DISREGARDING THAT CUSTOM IS THE SAME AS DISREGARDING THOSE WHO FIRST PIONEERED THE ART.
RESPECT YOUR CULTURE, DOG.
THE CUSTOM OF KEEPING WOMEN FROM THE BELLOWS HAS BEEN AROUND SINCE IRONWORKING FIRST CAME INTO EXISTENCE IN JAPAN.

WHAT WOULD YOU THINK IF OTHER WOMEN WERE ON THE IRONWORKING GROUNDS?!
LADY KANAYA-KOGAMI!
HUH?! ME?!
THEN SHUT YOUR MOUTHS AND LISTEN TO TEACHER FOR A MINUTE.
NO? BIG SURPRISE!
AND SINCE YOU RULE THIS VILLAGE, I ASSUME YOU KNOW WHY WOMEN ARE KEPT FROM THE BELLOWS?
SLAP SLAP
IF SOME WOMEN YOU'D NEVER MET WENT INTO YOUR KITCHEN-- REARRANGING THINGS, USING YOUR STUFF, MAKING A BIG MESS...
HOW WOULD THAT MAKE YOU FEEL, YOUKO-CHAN?
VILLAGE HEADMAN
THAT'S DECEPTIVE TRASH!
SO! THE ONLY WOMAN ALLOWED ON THE GROUNDS IS LADY KANAYAKOGAMI! DO YOU REALLY WANT TO SET HER OFF?
I WOULD FEEL ANGER!

THESE ARE THE LESSONS PASSED OOWN BY YOUR ANCESTORS-- TREAT THEM WITH A LITTLE MORE RESPECT.
HMPH!
SUPERSTI TIONS ANO CUSTOMS HAVE FOUNOA TIONS TO THEM, YOU REALIZE
YOU ALL JUST REMEMBER WHO'S IN POSSESSION OF YOU-KNOW-WHAT!
WHY OO YOU LET THAT JERK OPPRESS YOU?
HE OOESN'T OESERVE TO BE IN CHARGE HERE!
B-BUT HE...
HE POSSESSES THE TETSUZAN HISHO

IT'S NOT THAT.
HM?
DOESN'T EVERYBOOY ALREADY KNOW ALL THE METHOOS AND HISTORY TO IRONWORKING? WHY THE NEEO FOR THE HARD COPY?
THE TETSUZAN HISHO? I KNOW IT'S SUPPOSEO TO BE A TIME-HONORED TEXT ABOUT IRONWORKING, BUT...
KAN-CHAN?
HMM.
..THE TATARA CANNOT PERSIST.
WITHOUT IT...
YEAH!
On the count of three.
FINE. THEN I'LL SIMPLIFY THINGS FOR NOW...
...AND JUST ACCEPT THAT THE TETSUZAN HISHO IS VALUABLE TO THESE PEOPLE, FOR WHATEVER REASON.

...BY SNATCHING THAT BOOK. ♡
WE CAN MAKE OUR PROGRESS...

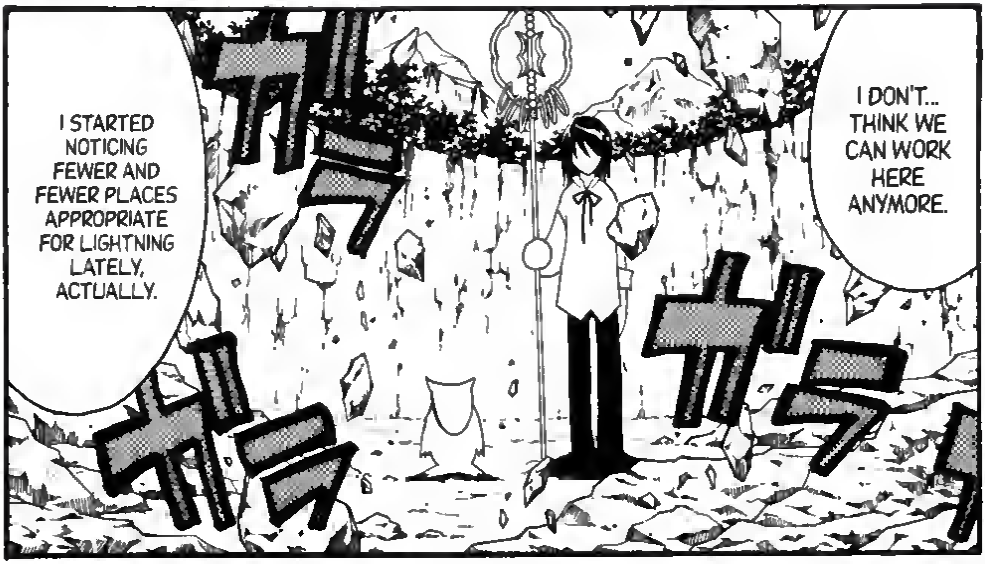
IF WE FREE THE BOOK, THAT MIGHT FREE EVERYONE'S TONGUES AND PRESTO! WE FIND KENSAKU
AND I'M WILLING TO BET HIM DANGLING THAT BOOK OVER THE VILLAGE'S COLLECTIVE HEAD IS ALSO THE REASON EVERYONE'S SO CLOSED-LIPPED ABOUT THE TORATSUGUMI SOCIETY.
I'M SURE HE KEEPS HIS GOOD STUFF CLOSE
IT WOULD MAKE SENSE FOR THE TETSUZAN HISHO TO BE IN THE VILLAGE HEADMAN'S HOUSE.

I THINK THE YOUNG WIFE'S KEEPING WATCH RIGHT N--
NOW ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS WAIT FOR THE HOUSE TO EMPTY.

HUH?

NOW, YOUKO-CHAN. YOU KNOW IT'S WRONG TO STEAL, BUT YOU ALSO KNOW THAT WHAT THAT BAD MAN IS DOING IS EVEN MORE WRONG
IT DOESN'T WORK IF YOU SAY THAT LAST PART OUT LOUD
AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT I'LL TELL THE CHILDREN!
PRIDE!

AND LIKE ADULTERY!
LIKE HUSBAND, LIKE WIFE.
EEEWW
OH HO!
WE COULD'VE USED HARUKA-CHAN'S GIGOLO SKILLS RIGHT ABOUT NOW.


I STARTED NOTICING FEWER AND FEWER PLACES APPROPRIATE FOR LIGHTNING LATELY, ACTUALLY.
I DON'T... THINK WE CAN WORK HERE ANYMORE.
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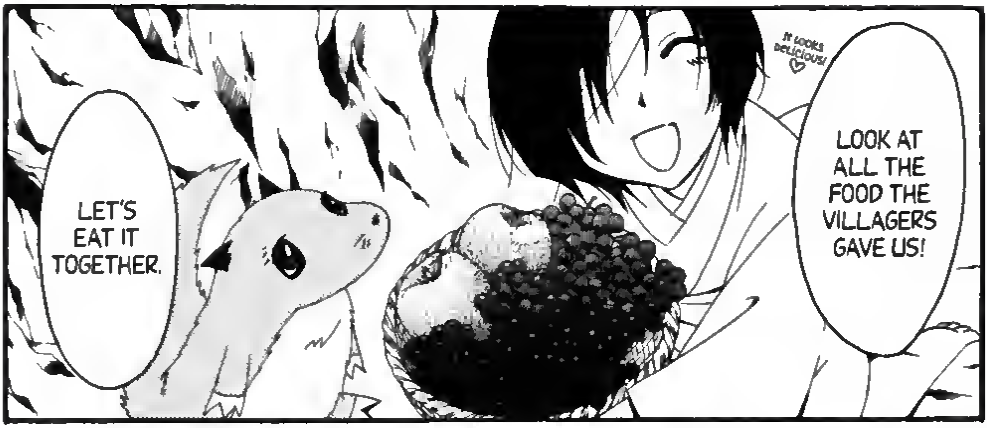
HAVEN'T THE HUMANS NOTICED?
IF THEY KEEP THIS UP, THEIR VILLAGE WILL COLLAPSE RIGHT WITH THE MOUNTAIN.

HN.
SO IT'S JUST LIKE KANTAROU SAID.
HE DID NAME US BUT HE WASN'T THE ONE WHO RESTRAINED US
HEY.
DID THAT UNMYSTICAL IDIOT REALLY NAME YOU TWO?
I DON'T THINK OUR MASTER THINKS THAT FAR AHEAD

NOTHING.
WHAT WAS THAT?
IT'S NOT GOOD TO BE STUBBORN IN TIMES LIKE THESE.
ARE YOU STILL FIGHTING WITH MISTER KANTAROU?
WELL... UM...
SO HE WAS WEARING WESTERN CLOTHES. ANYTHING ELSE?
HM? HE LOOKED A LOT LIKE YOU, LORD DEMON EATER
WHAT WAS THE SORCERER WHO RESTRAINED YOU LIKE?
GOOD WORK OUT HERE!
YOU'RE ONE TO TALK, SIR.
I FORGOT THAT YOU TWO HAVE TINY BRAINS.
YESTERDAY WE ATE RADISH LEAVES WITH MILLET AND WHEAT. ♡
I BROUGHT A SNACK FOR YOU


LOOK AT ALL THE FOOD THE VILLAGERS GAVE US!
IT LOOKS DELICIOUS!
LET'S EAT IT TOGETHER.

IT SEEMS TO TAKE MORE AND MORE TIME TO RECOVER MY STRENGTH THESE DAYS.
YOU SHOULD PROBABLY STOP USING YOUR POWERS.
IF YOU PUSH YOURSELF ANY HARDER--

ARE YOU OKAY BEING UP?
I'M FINE I'M SORRY I SLEPT THE WHOLE DAY THROUGH

.....

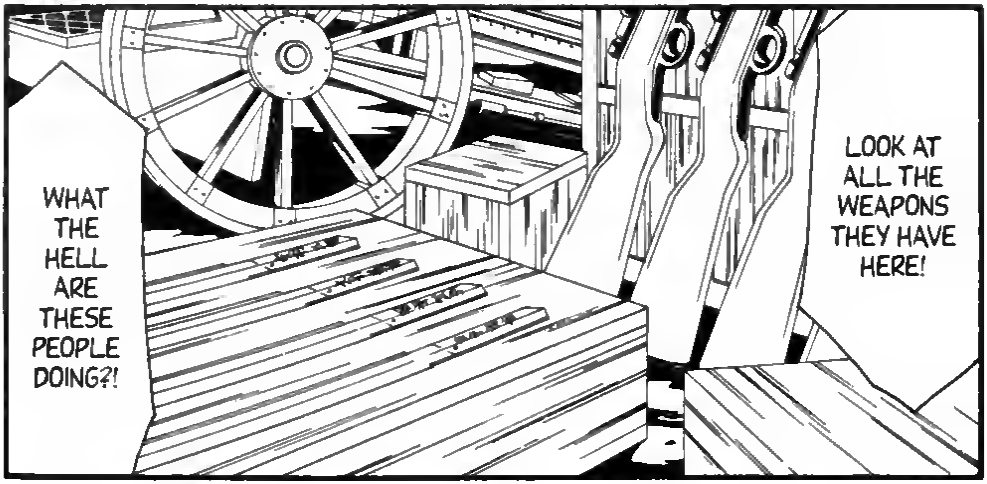
THERE ARE THOSE WHO NEED WHAT I HAVE WITHIN ME. IF THAT CAN BE OF USE TO THE VILLAGERS I LOVE SO MUCH...
...THEN I WANT TO KEEP THIS UP FOR AS LONG AS I CAN.

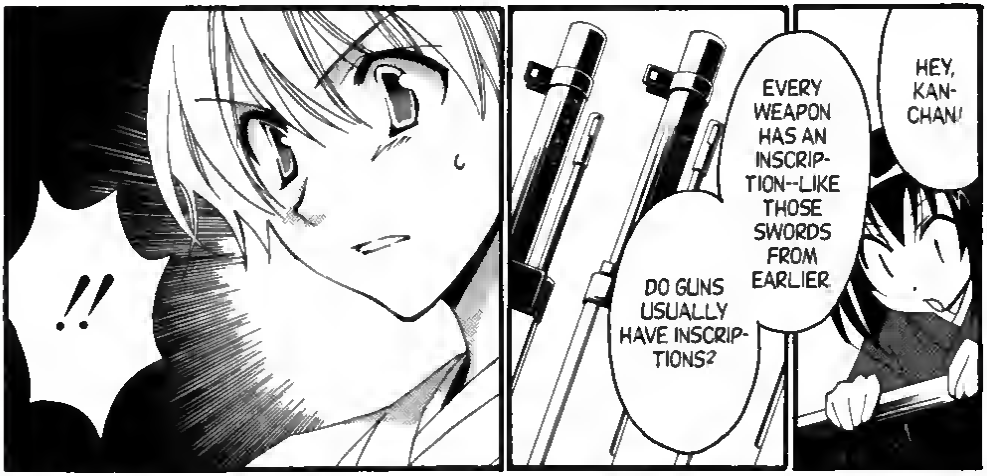
IF I DON'T SUMMON SPIRITS, I'LL BE USELESS TO THIS VILLAGE
I MUST USE MY VOICE.

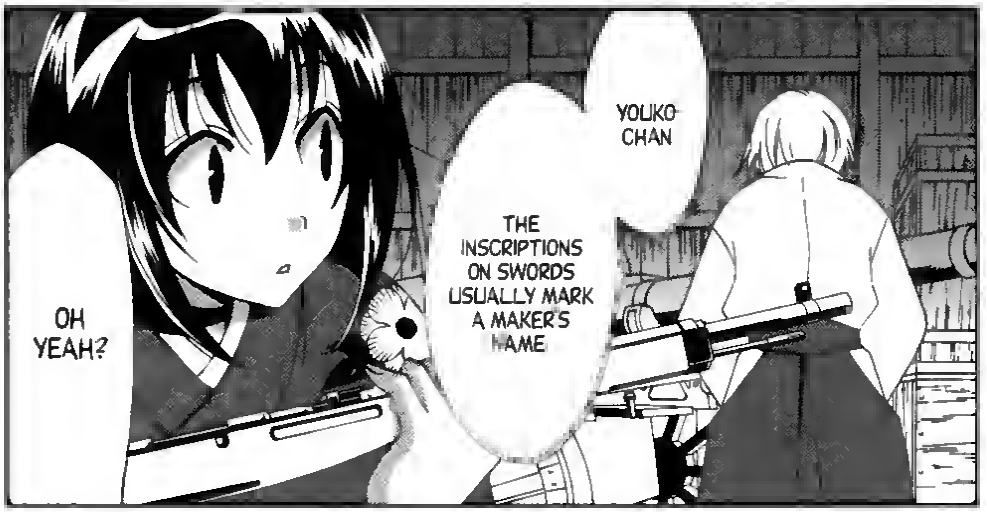
UM.
.....
DEMON EATER. YOU POSSESS A POWER FAR GREATER THAN MINE
?!
DEMON EATER?
IS IT TRUE THAT YOUR POWERS HAVE A LIMITER ON THEM?
HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT?
!
ARE YOU TWO FIGHTING, PERHAPS?
YOU'RE NOT WITH YOUR MASTER RIGHT NOW.

YOU KNOW... MISTER KANTAROU COMES BY HERE SOMETIMES.
WE TALK ABOUT ALL SORTS OF THINGS AND HAVE A LOVELY TIME.
BUT EVERY TIME HE SEES THAT YOU'RE NOT HERE..
...HE LETS OUT A LITTLE SIGH.
COMPARED TO WE YOUKAI, HUMANS HAVE VERY SHORT LIVES.
I WISH YOU REALIZED THAT YOUR TIME WITH HIM IS VERY PRECIOUS RIGHT NOW.
I HOPE...
...THAT NEITHER OF YOU HAS TO LATER FACE REGRET.

WHAT PERFECT TIMING—WOULD YOU MIND CARRYING THESE BOXES TO THE STOREHOUSE?
HOW SIMPLE! NOT AT ALL!
IS IT FABULOUS? REALLY? AND WHAT HAPPENED TO SNEAKING INTO THAT HOUSE?
YOU SAW HOW THE VILLAGE HEADMAN BARELY LEAVES WE DON'T STAND A CHANCE!
TODAY'S THE DAY WE FULFILL OUR FABULOUS PLAN!
MY PART OF THE JOB WILL BE UNLOCKING THE DOOR!
Heavy!
IT LOOKS LIKE A CANNON.
WHOA! WHAT IS THAT, KAN-CHAN?!
IT MUST BE A KILN FOR MAKING CANNONS!
THEN THAT REVERB-ERATORY FURNACE IN THE VILLAGE


WHAT THE HELL ARE THESE PEOPLE DOING?!
LOOK AT ALL THE WEAPONS THEY HAVE HERE!


!!
DO GUNS USUALLY HAVE INSCRIPTIONS?
EVERY WEAPON HAS AN INSCRIPTION--LIKE THOSE SWORDS FROM EARLIER
HEY, KAN-CHAN!


OH YEAH?
THE INSCRIPTIONS ON SWORDS USUALLY MARK A MAKER'S NAME
YOUKO-CHAN

MEANING THAT THESE SWORDS...

...WERE MADE BY THE DOLLS.

Miyako Katsuragi

DO YOU KNOW THE STORY OF "THE FIRE ON NEW YEAR'S DAY"?
CAN'T SAY THAT I DO.
ONE NEW YEAR'S EVE, A YOUNG WIFE LIT A FIRE IN HER HEARTH-- KEEPING UP THE PRACTICE OF KEEPING A FIRE BURNING THAT NIGHT.

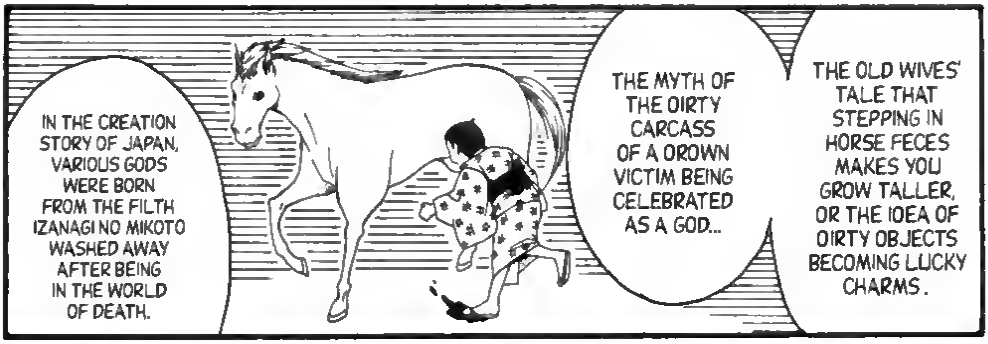
WHEN THE MOTHER-IN-LAW SAW THAT THE FIRE WASN'T OUT, SHE ASKED THE YOUNG WIFE WHAT HAD HAPPENED. THE WIFE FINALLY TOLD HER AND OPENED THE CASKET SHE'D BEEN HIDING IN THE SHACK, REVEALING THAT THE DEAD BODY HAD TURNED INTO A KOBAN*.
WITH HER PRECIOUS FIRE OUT, THE YOUNG WIFE RAN OUTSIDE TO CRY--ONLY TO SEE A FIRE BEHIND THE HILL OF THE GOD OF WAR. WHEN SHE WENT THERE, A FRIGHTENING MAN GAVE HER FIRE AND A DEAD BODY.
THEN HER WICKED MOTHER-IN-LAW SNUFFED IT OUT ON HER.

*A Japanese oval gold coin that went out of circulation a long time ago

IN A WAY, THE STORY I TOLD YOU ABOUT LADY KANAYAKOGAMI IS SIMILAR.
THERE ARE OTHER TALES ABOUT CADAVERS TURNING INTO TREASURE, TOO.
THERE'S ALSO THE "GUEST ON NEW YEAR'S DAY" STORY ABOUT A VISITOR ON NEW YEAR'S DAY DYING, AND THE DEAD BODY TURNING TO GOLD TO ENRICH THE HOST

UM.. THAT'S A PRETTY BIZARRE STORY.
DEPENDING ON THE REGION, THE DETAILS OF THE STORY DIFFER. THE ONLY CONSTANT THEME IS THAT OF DEATH.

THINK ABOUT HOW OFTEN THIS COMES UP IN EVERYDAY LIFE.
THIS IS A REVERSAL OF IMPURITY--TAKING SOMETH-ING OF LITTLE VALUE AND CONVERT-ING IT INTO RICHES.
EXACTLY.
OH.
YOU MEAN HOW HER PROPPED-UP BODY STILL SPURRED IRON PRODUCTION?


IN THE CREATION STORY OF JAPAN, VARIOUS GODS WERE BORN FROM THE FILTH IZANAGI NO MIKOTO WASHED AWAY AFTER BEING IN THE WORLD OF DEATH.
THE MYTH OF THE DIRTY CARCASS OF A DROWN VICTIM BEING CELEBRATED AS A GOD...
THE OLD WIVES' TALE THAT STEPPING IN HORSE FECES MAKES YOU GROW TALLER, OR THE IDEA OF DIRTY OBJECTS BECOMING LUCKY CHARMS.

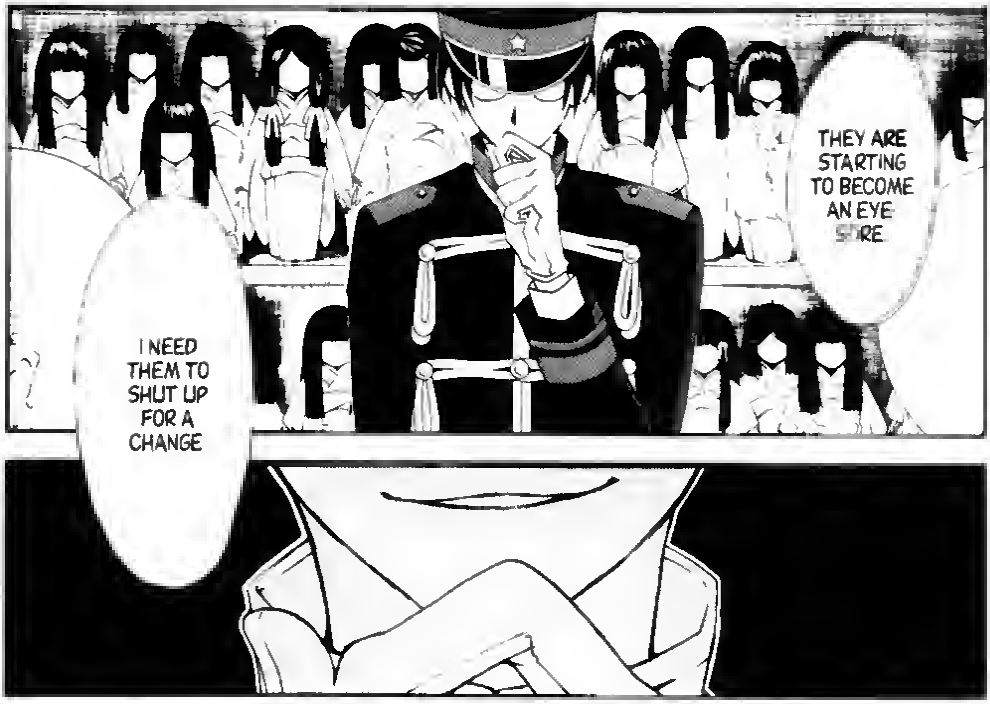
SOME PEOPLE DID INDEED CONSIDER THE POWER OF DEATH AS DIVINE AND STARTED PRAYING APPROPRIATELY
THEY THINK THEY CAN INVOKE IT LIKE SOMETHING HOLY?
YOU BET.
SO IF YOU THINK OF DEATH AS A POWER, THAT POWER WOULD SEEM UNSTOPPABLE.
FOR WE HUMANS, DEATH COMES FOR EVERYONE--NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR WHAT YOU DO.

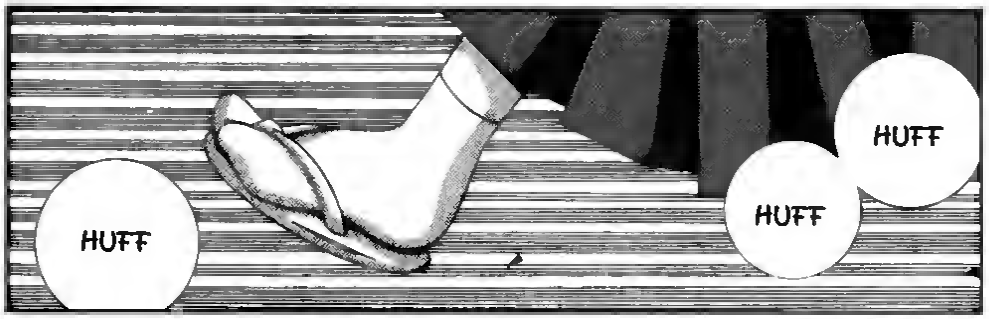
WHAT?
KAN-CHAN?!
I KNOW THAT YOU YOUKAI HATE THE WORD "FILTHY"...
...BUT TO THIS DAY I CAN'T DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOUKAI ARE FILTHY.

I'VE ALWAYS WONDERED THAT IF FILTH CARRIES THE SAME MEANING AS THE POWER OF "DEATH"...
JUST FROM MY PERSPECTIVE AS A SCHOLAR, YOUKO-CHAN.
..THEN MAYBE WE FEAR THE FILTH WE COULDN'T POSSIBLY CONTEND WITH, AND, IN A WAY, ADMIRE IT.
.....
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I DON'T REALLY GET IT.
IN OTHER WORDS, THERE ARE HUMANS WHO LOOK UP TO AND ADMIRE YOU YOUKAI.
LIKE ME, FOR EXAMPLE.

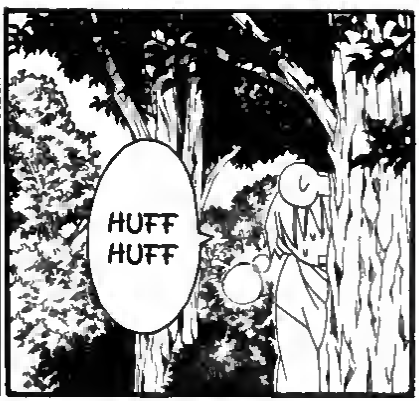
SO IF YOU'RE CALLED "FILTHY" BY SOME HUMAN...
...THAT'S NOT NECESSARILY AN INSULT.
IT'LL BE A PIECE OF CAKE, BELIEVE ME. BOY FIGHTS ARE WAY SIMPLER THAN GIRL FIGHTS!
PUT YOURSELF IN THERE, LOOK FOR AN OPENING, AND THEN MAKE A LITTLE TALKY WHILE YOU PUNCH EACH OTHER!
!
HMPH!
THAT'S IT!
THAT'S WHAT YOU HAVE TO TELL HARUKA-CHAN!
OW!
STOP TH-- OW!
AN OPENING, HUH?
YEAH?
THANKS, YOUKO-CHAN. I SHOULD GO FIND HIM!
FIX YOUR MESSES, KAN-CHAN!

.....
BUT IF HARUKA AND I ACTUALLY FIGHT, WE'LL DIE BEFORE THE TALKING BIT.
THEN APOLOGIZE LIKE YOU'RE READY TO DIE!
I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY MORE!
THE VILLAGERS KEEP DISOBEYING ME.
MY SON WAS NEVER A HELP, BUT NOW ONE OF THOSE "GODS" IS REALLY GETTING IN MY--
HUH?
WE ASSUMED THAT WOULD HAPPEN.
STILL...


THEY ARE STARTING TO BECOME AN EYE SORE
I NEED THEM TO SHUT UP FOR A CHANGE


HUFF
HUFF
HUFF

TO MAKE UP AFTER A FIGHT...
..YOU HAVE TO FIND AN OPENING.


HUFF HUFF

I HURT HARUKA.
SO I'M THE ONE...
...WHO HAS TO MAKE THAT OPENING.
KANTAROU-SAN.
IS HARUKA HERE?!
TSUGUMI-CHAN!

THANKS, TSUGUMI-CHAN I'LL COME AGAIN SOON!
W--
WAIT, MISTER KANTAROU!
THE OEMON EATER SAID HE HAD SOMETHING TO DO AT THE VILLAGE
I JUST MISSED HIM, HUH?

ER...
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
.....

LEGENDARY YOUKAI ARE ALWAYS BEING OVERTAKEN BY GREEDY HUMANS
HUH?
KANTAROU-SAN..
WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH THE OEMON EATER?

CAN YOU REALLY PROTECT HIM?!
OR DO YOU JUST PLAN TO USE HIM?!
KAN-CHAN!
HARUKA-CHAN SAID HE'D BE SOMEWHERE AROUND--
KAN-CHAN!

I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIS STUPID SON ONE WAY OR ANOTHER
THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO STEAL THE TETSUZAN WHATCHA-MACALLIT! THE VILLAGE HEADMAN'S OUT!
WE'VE GOTTA HURRY!
PLAN-NING TO JOIN ME, YOUKO-CHAN?
THERE YOU ARE!
R-RIGHT.
HE SAID HE'D HELP OUT! SO YOU HAVE TO GO, KAN-CHAN!
YOU'VE SEEN HAR-UKA?!
AND I ASKED HARUKA-CHAN TO WORK THE WIFE FOR US, TOO!
RATTLE

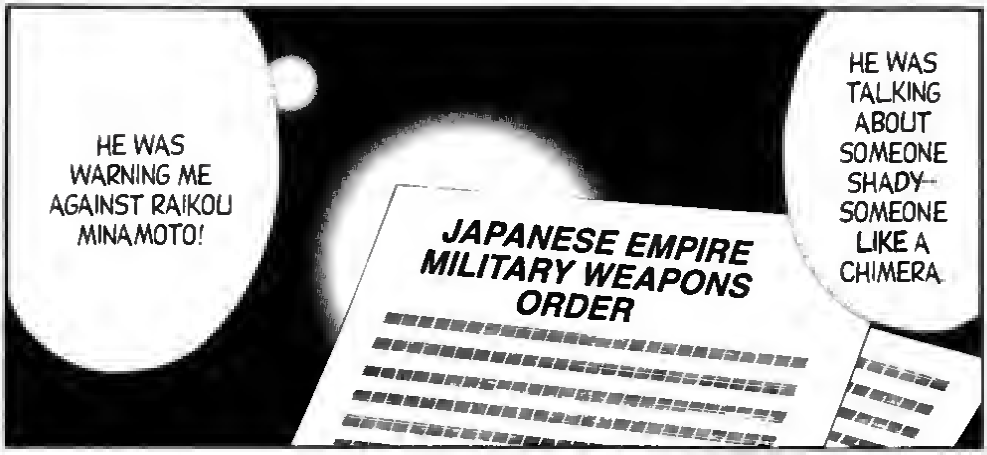
tactics 7

And I will not steal unnecessary finds! no!
Waaahhh!
HARUKA AND YOUKO-CHAN ARE COUNTING ON ME.
THIS IS MY ONLY CHANCE
WHEN IT COMES TO PRECIOUS ITEMS...
..THE AVERAGE PERSON PUTS HIS TREASURE WHERE HE FEELS MOST COMFORTABLE.
LIKE THIS!
HUFF
!
HUFF
ALMOST . THERE!
NNPH!
LIKE...

*A Chinese vehicle with a compass whose needle always points south.

tactics 7

.....
WELL, WELL.
HUH?
"DON'T LET THE TORATSUGUMI BEWITCH YOU."
HASUMI
RUSTLE
THESE PAPERS FELL OUT WITH IT...


HE WAS WARNING ME AGAINST RAIKOU MINAMOTO!
JAPANESE EMPIRE MILITARY WEAPONS ORDER
HE WAS TALKING ABOUT SOMEONE SHADY— SOMEONE LIKE A CHIMERA

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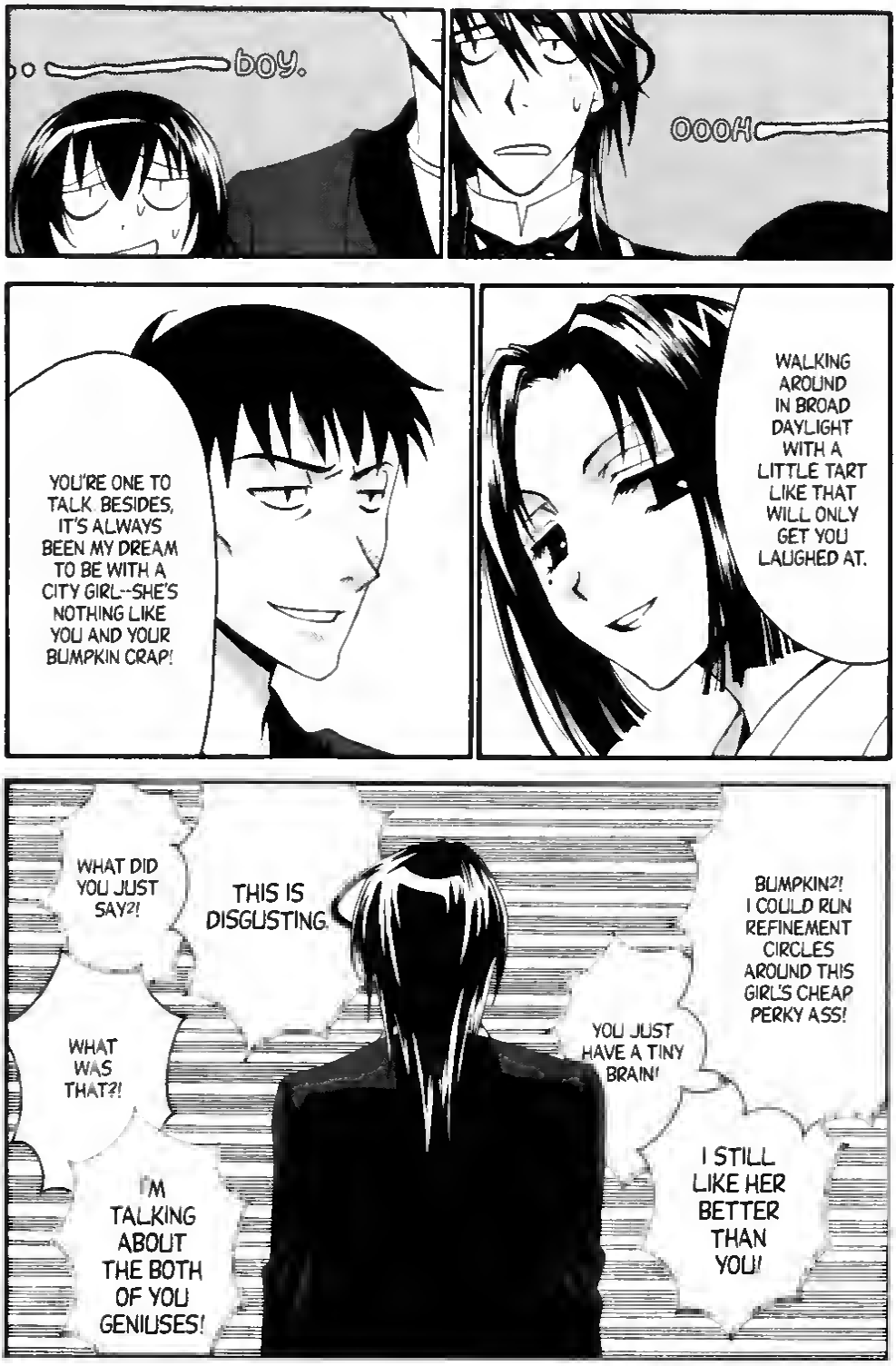
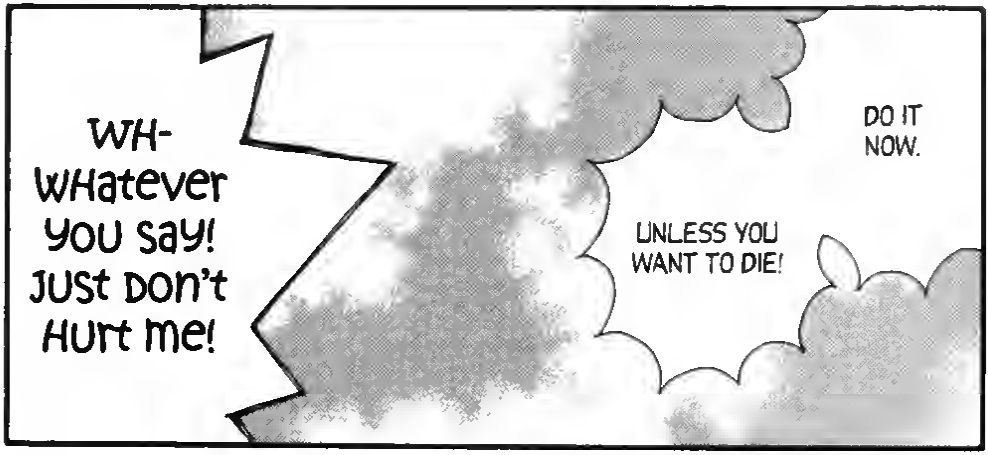

boy.
OOOH
YOU'RE ONE TO TALK. BESIDES, IT'S ALWAYS BEEN MY DREAM TO BE WITH A CITY GIRL--SHE'S NOTHING LIKE YOU AND YOUR BUMPKIN CRAP!
WALKING AROUND IN BROAD DAYLIGHT WITH A LITTLE TART LIKE THAT WILL ONLY GET YOU LAUGHED AT.
WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?!
THIS IS DISGUSTING.
BUMPKIN?! I COULD RUN REFINEMENT CIRCLES AROUND THIS GIRL'S CHEAP PERKY ASS!
WHAT WAS THAT?!
YOU JUST HAVE A TINY BRAIN!
I'M TALKING ABOUT THE BOTH OF YOU GENIUSES!
I STILL LIKE HER BETTER THAN YOU!

SHUT UP!
THAT'S IT!
WAGH!
H-HARUKA-CHAN?!
You scared me.
Y-YES?!
YOU...
HUH?!
YOU'RE GOING TO CANCEL THE NAMES OF THE RAIJUU.

tactics 7


WH-WHatever YOU SAY! JUST DON'T HURT ME!
UNLESS YOU WANT TO DIE!
DO IT NOW.

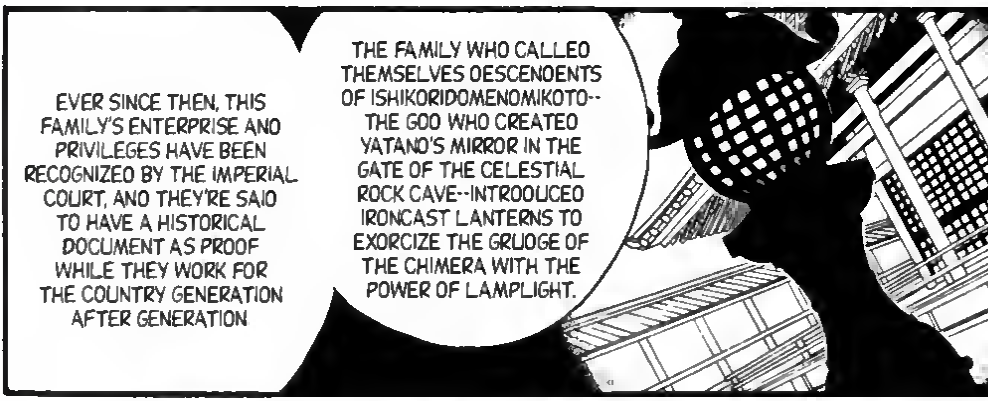
WOULD YOU TWO OVER THERE COME HELP WITH THE SWORD-SMITHING?
ROGER THAT.

YOUR VILLAGE CRAFTS A VARIETY OF THINGS, DOESN'T IT?
IT SURE DOES. FROM MONEY TO KATANA--WITH IRON, YOU CAN MAKE ANYTHING.
YOU'RE DRESSED SO FORMALLY.
HOW ARE YOU, LORD WHITE SNAKE?

AND THEY'RE ALL FOR THE MILITARY.
.....
BUT WHAT YOU MAKE THE MOST ARE SWORDS, GUNS AND CANNONS.
...THERE'S A NAME INSCRIP-TION.
BUT IT'S OBVIOUSLY NOT THE NAME OF THE MAKER.
Miyako Katsuragi
ON EVERY WEAPON HERE...
THEY'RE AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY
THOSE INSCRIPTIONS REPRESENT THE FINAL HONOR OF THE TATARA VILLAGE
SO WHY INCLUDE AN INSCRIPTION AT ALL?
WE MUST.

THE TORATSUGUMI SOCIETY WAS AN ORGANIZATION THAT PURCHASED CORPSES TO BEGIN WITH. SO THEY WEREN'T REALLY HOPING TO REVIVE CORPSES....
THE TORATSUGUMI SOCIETY GETS ITS HANDS ON DEAD BODIES, CALLS FORTH THE SPIRITS, AND "BRINGS PEOPLE BACK TO LIFE" WITHIN SMALL DOLLS.
BUT I COULDN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT WHERE THOSE CORPSES WERE ENDING UP. EVEN THOUGH THE FLESH CAN'T BE PUT TO ANY USE, THE REMAINS WEREN'T BURIED OR RETURNED.
HA HA! IS SOMETHING WRONG, LORD WHITE SNAKE?
WHY WOULD THE SOCIETY WANT DEAD BODIES? SINCE A PRODIGY WHO CAN SUMMON SPIRITS HAPPENED TO BE BORN IN THIS VILLAGE, THEY WANTED TO DO CHARITABLE--
LET ME TELL YOU A STORY.
...THEY WERE JUST HOPING TO GET THEM FOR SOME OTHER PURPOSE.
ARE THE INSCRIPTIONS ON THESE SWORDS THE NAMES OF THE DEAD?

LONG AGO, A YOUKAI CALLED A CHIMERA TORMENTED THE EMPEROR, AND SO WAS EVENTUALLY EXTERMINATED BY THE MILITARY COMMANDER YORIMASA MINAMOTO. DO YOU KNOW THAT LEGEND?
HUH?
AFTER THE EXTERMINATION OF THE CHIMERA, ALL THE LIGHTS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT WENT OUT, AND THE EMPEROR GREW VERY ILL.


THE FAMILY WHO CALLED THEMSELVES DESCENDENTS OF ISHIKORIDOMENOMIKOTO--THE GOD WHO CREATED YATANO'S MIRROR IN THE GATE OF THE CELESTIAL ROCK CAVE--INTRODUCED IRONCAST LANTERNS TO EXORCIZE THE GRUDGE OF THE CHIMERA WITH THE POWER OF LAMPLIGHT.
EVER SINCE THEN, THIS FAMILY'S ENTERPRISE AND PRIVILEGES HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE IMPERIAL COURT, AND THEY'RE SAID TO HAVE A HISTORICAL DOCUMENT AS PROOF WHILE THEY WORK FOR THE COUNTRY GENERATION AFTER GENERATION

THIS TETSUZAN HISHO... NO.
THIS VALUABLE HISTORICAL DOCUMENT HAS IT ALL WRITTEN INSIDE.
THIS PROOF OF YOUR TARARA TRIBE'S EXIS-TENCE...
WHERE DID YOU GET THAT?!
AND NOW YOU'RE LEGALLY LIMITED TO BEING AN ORGANIZATION WITH PERMISSION TO USE WEAPONS IN JAPAN

...YOU'RE MAKING WEAPONS THAT HAVE THE IMPURITY OF DEATH.
BY ORDER OF THE MILITARY...
AND YOU'RE RIGHT..
..OF COURSE.
YOU CAN'T LIE TO A GOD.
WELL, IT'S TRUE WHAT THEY SAY.
INTEGRATION OF YOUKAI?
IT'S BEEN CALLED THE "INTEGRATION OF YOUKAI" INTO WEAPONS
WITH THE POWER OF THE IMPURITY OF DEATH WITHIN THEM THEY SAY THESE WEAPONS HAVE LIMITLESS POWER

USING THE CORPSES OF STRANGERS TO MAKE KILLING MACHINES...
...ISN'T SOMETHING WE WANTED TO DO.
IF WE'RE TOLD TO MAKE WEAPONS BY THE NATION, WE CAN ONLY COMPLY WE DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO REFUSE.
STILL...
FOR HAVING VIOLATED THE BODIES OF THE DEAD, WE HUMBLY AND SHAMEFULLY AIMED FOR SOME SMALL REPOSE FOR THE DECEASED.
THAT'S WHY WE CHISEL THE NAMES OF THE DEAD INTO OUR WEAPONS.
THAT'S YOUR SILENT PROTEST?

BUT I SUPPOSE THE ACTION OF CHISELING A NAME CAN BE SYMBOLIC OF INSCRIBING A MEMORY INTO ONE'S HEART.
IT MAKES SENSE.
IN A WAY, I LIKE THAT.
BUT THE VILLAGERS HAVE TO KNOW ABOUT THIS.
AND WHILE I'M AT IT, HERE'S A PIECE OF CRITICISM-- YOU'RE NOT DOING THE MILITARY PROUD ENOUGH.
THE TORATSUGUMI SOCIETY IS BARELY EVEN PUBLICIZED. AND YOU REVIVE TOO FEW PEOPLE FROM THE DEAD.
WAIT.
IT'S BECAUSE EACH DEATH MAKES A CHAIN.

SAKATA?
M--
MASTER SAKATA!
YOU...!
IS THAT KATSU-RAGI?!
WHY DIDN'T HE GO HOME?!

tactics 7

I'M LONELY, FATHER... PLEASE, HURRY...
I KNOW, SWEET-HEART.
I...I'M SORRY, MIYAKO.
PAPA'S COMING.
NO!
MISTER KATSURAGI, DON'T!
THIS...
WATCH THIS, ICHINOMIYA-SENSEI.
ONE DEATH BRINGS ANOTHER AND THEY ALL END UP BACK HERE.

...IS THE CHAIN OF DEATH.

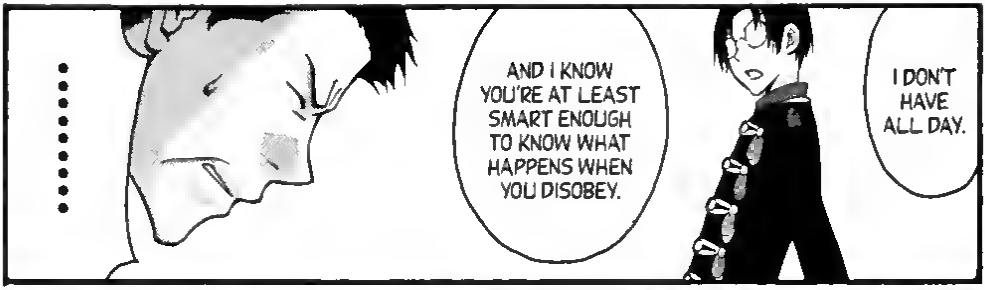
CONGRATULATIONS, GUYS!
NOW THAT YOUR NAMES ARE GONE, YOU'RE A PAIR OF FREE SOULS!
WHAT'S THE MATTER HARUKA-CHAN?
BLOOD...
スクッ
WHO'RE YOU CALLING PUG-NOSED?!
THIS IS ALL THANKS TO LORD DEMON EATER AND THE PUG-NOSED YOUKO-CHAN!
LET'S CELEBRATE TONIGHT!
YIPPEE!
YAY!
WOOO!

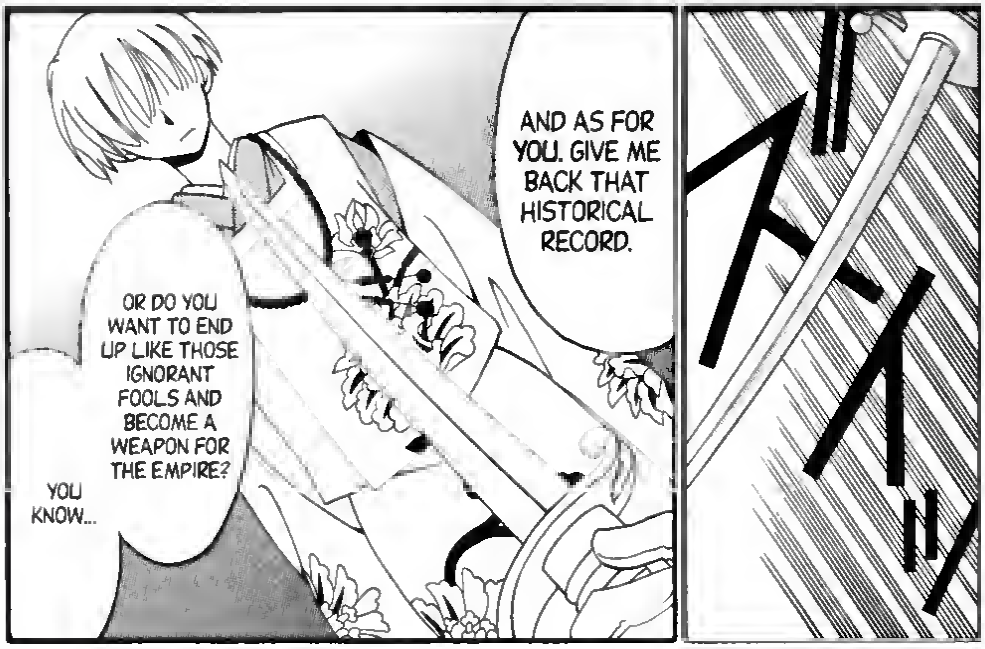
HUFF
HUFF
DEMON-EATING... TENGU...
TSUGUMI!
I SMELL BLOOD
I'M GOING TO FOLLOW IT.
ガタ
LADY TSU-GUMI!
THAT GIRL'S THE CHIMERA YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT?
YOU BROKE PAST THE FORCE FIELD DIDN'T YOU? WHY WOULD YOU PUSH YOURSELF LIKE THAT?
I HAD TO... TELL YOU SOME-THING
DID YOU MAKE UP WITH KANTAROU-SAN?

MAKE UP WITH HIM... SOON...
...AND THEN HAVE HIM CANCEL THE NAME HE GAVE YOU.
NOT... EXACTLY
WHAT?
...IS ALL BECAUSE OF MY NAME!
THE REASON MY BODY IS SO WEAK... AND I SUFFER THROUGH SO MUCH PAIN...
HUFF
SO PLEASE...!
HUFF
HUFF

I DON T WANT YOU TO GO DOWN THE ROAD I DID. DEMON-EATING TENGU.
SO HURRY...
HURRY AND CANCEL YOUR OVERLAPPING NAME...!

TAKE YOUR NEW MATERIAL AND GET BACK TO WORK.
COME ON.


I DON'T HAVE ALL DAY.
AND I KNOW YOU'RE AT LEAST SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DISOBEY.
.....


AND AS FOR YOU. GIVE ME BACK THAT HISTORICAL RECORD.
OR DO YOU WANT TO END UP LIKE THOSE IGNORANT FOOLS AND BECOME A WEAPON FOR THE EMPIRE?
YOU KNOW...

I'LL NEVER FORGIVE YOU FOR THE SHAME YOU BROUGHT TO MASTER RAIKOU.
PREPARE YOURSELF, KANTAROU ICHINOMIYA.

IN THE NEXT VOLUME OF

tactics

The last part of the Chimera arc comes to a close as Kantarou and Haruka battle Minamoto and Sakata. Haruka finally puts Kantarou's worries to rest as he announces his loyalty and friendship to Kantarou, but Minamoto still has one nasty trick up his sleeve. And later, Kantarou comes a little closer to learning the mysterious story of Haruka's former master...